FIFTEENE

SERMONS VPON THE SONG OF SALOMON.

Written by GEORGE GYFFARD, *Preacher of the Word at Maulden in Essex.*

AT LONDON
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SERMONS
UPON THESE
OCCASIONS.

AT LONDON
Printed by [illegible] for
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TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, AND HIS very good Lord, *Robert Deuereux*, Earle of Eſſex and Ewe, Vicount Hereford and Bourgcher, Lord Ferrers of Chartly, Bourgcher and Louaine, Knight of the honorable Oder of the Garter, Maiſter of the Horſe, Generall of her Maieſties Ordnance and Munition, one of her moſt honorable priuie Conncell, and Earle Marſhall of England.

G. Gyfford wiſheth increaſe of all true honour in this life, and eternall felicitie in the life to come.

IEſus Chriſt, the King of Kinges, betrothed himſelfe to his Church of olde time: ſhe is become his ſpouſe whom he loueth deerely. The mariage ſhall be at the generall iudgement in the end of this world, when it ſhall be ſolemnized with great ioy and triumph, as it is written: *I heard as*

the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of ſtrong thundringes, ſaying, Hallelu-iah: for our Lorde God almightie hath raigned. Let vs bee glad and reioyce, and giue glory to him: for the mariage of the Lambe is come, and his wife hath made her ſelfe readie. Reuel. 19. verſ. 6. 7. In the meane time, while ſhe is a pilgrime here vpon earth, there is (according to the ancient manner) a Loue-ſong betweene them, which king Salomon framed and penned, not guided by humane wiſedome, but by the inſpiration of the heauenly ſpirit. As it is a ſong betweene the two chiefe ſtates, the higheſt Lord and the greateſt Ladie; ſo doth it containe the greateſt myſteries, the moſt ſweete and comfortable

doctrine

doctrine, and is therefore worthilie named the Song of Songs. *In* it this Bridegroome and his Bride do highly extoll and praiſe each other. To ſet foorth his excellent dignitie, his riches & glorie, with all thoſe ſweet thinges that flow vnto her from him, ſhe doth bring in all the ſtatelieſt, the richeſt, the goodlieſt, and the ſweeteſt things vnder heauen. *The* like doth he in praiſing her beautie, and her delectable ſweetnes. From hence doth ſpring the great delight and pleaſure, which the one taketh in the other, where they doo (as it were) vnfolde the vehement paſſions of their loue, with that feruent deſire which hee hath to bee moſt neerely ioyned vnto him, and to dwell with him for euer.

Alſo there doo many goodly tokens paſſe betweene them: for he beſtoweth vppon her verie rich iewelles and heauenly ornaments to deck & to beautifie her withal: and ſhe againe rendreth vnto him the ſweet fruits of her loue. Moreouer her frailties, her imperfections, and her vnkinde dealing at ſometimes towards her welbeloued, are not omitted, nor the ſore afflictions which by that occaſion ſhe doth endure. And finding that his Loue is moſt ſtedfaſt, nothing altred nor diminiſhed by her frailtie & vndutifulnes towards him, ſhe is the more enflamed to ſeeke after him, and to craue his preſence and protection, while ſhe is here below in the midſt of ſo many cruell enemies. Many other

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ſpecial things there be which I do here omit. I doo offer this booke vnto your Lordſhip, not that I eſteeme my ſlender labours in expounding it, worthy to come into your honourable handes: but for the excellent worthines of the matters therein contained. The Princes and Nobles of the earth are delighted to heare of matters which are ſtately, magnificall and of great glorie: becauſe great thinges doe become great ones. Here are the greateſt of all. The Kings & Emperors of this world, eſpecially in their chiefe ſolemnities, as in the day of their Coronation, or at the marriage of their ſonnes and daughters, doo ſhew a greater glorie in riches & delicate pleaſure: but if we compare them

with the glorie, the riches & pleaſures of this Bridegroome and his Bride, they ſhall bee found to bee but beggarly traſh. For what are earthly, carnall, and tranſitorie things, compared with the things which are ſpirituall, heauenly and euerlaſting? Alſo if great matters delight men, which appertain vnto others, how much more the greateſt, which concerne themſelues? For who is the Bride in this Song that is ſo deare vnto Chriſt, vpon whom ſo many ornaments & goodly iewels are beſtowed? Verily the whole church, but yet ſo the whole, as euerie faithfull ſoule is the ſpouſe decked and made beautifull for ſo glorious an husband. The blindneſſe and mad follie of the worlde is here

here to be wondred at. Behold the wiſedome of the fleſh which glorieth in it ſelfe. If one ſhould forſake an infinite treaſure of pearle & precious ſtones, and lay hold of an heape of droſſe, for ſome glittering ſhew making choice of it, all men would haue him in deriſion. The fooliſhnes of the wiſeſt worldlings is much greater, while they ſo ſet their heartes vpō earthlie riches, carnall delightes, the pompe and glorie of this worlde, and are ſo drowned in the vnclean luſtes and pleaſures of ſinne, that they neglect the heauenlie treaſure, the rich iewels, and comelie ornaments, ſpirituall ioy and glory which the Bridegrome Ieſus chriſt beſtoweth vpon his ſpouſe. There is no care in ſeeking after them:

they

they delight to haue their bodies ſet forth and made glorious with goodlie attire, not caring how they defile the garmentes of their ſoule, or what filthie and ſtinking rags of vices it be cloathed withal. *I* doe not ſpeake this, as though a mã could not haue both the glory of this world, & that glory which is from aboue: for king Dauid had both the one and the other: ſo had Salomon, with many other Kinges and Nobles of the earth. But where anie are ſo ouerwhelmed, & euen drowned in the gulf of vaine delightes, and ſo reſt in the glorie of this world as a thing to be gloried in, that they cannot ſeeke after the heauenlie glorie, there is the fooliſhnes. It is no maruaile that the holie Ghoſt ter-

meth

meth the great wiſe men of this world fooles: for who ſeeth not how ſodainly all vaniſheth away as a ſhadowe that is here below? King Dauid in Pſal. 16. gloryeth that God was the portion of his inheritance, and ſaieth hee had a faire heritage. But by and by hee giueth thankes to God that gaue him counſell, yea euen by ſecrete inſpiratiõs in the night, for if God had not taught him, hee could neuer haue made ſo good a choiſe. It was alſo by faith, that Moſes, when he was come to age, refuſed to be called the ſonne of Pharaohs daughter, and choſe rather to ſuffer aduerſitie with the people of God, then to enioye the pleaſures of ſinnes for a ſeaſon. Eſteeming the rebuke of Chriſt greater

riches

riches then the treasures of Egypt: for hee had respecte vnto the recompence of the reward. Heb. 11. verse 24.25.26. Your Lordship is taught of God to follow these, and to make the like choise, as it doth manifestlie appeare by your singular loue and care to aduance his glorious Gospell: which maketh mee to hope that my rude boldnes shall obtain pardon. The mosthigh God encrease and stablish your Honor, not onelie on earth, but also for euer in the high heauens.

Amen.

Your Honors most dutifull to commaund

George Gyffard.

SERMONS VPON THE SONG OF SALOMON.

THE FIRST SERMON.

CHAP. I.

1 *The Song of Songs which was Salomons.*

2 *Let him kisse me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy loue is better then wine.*

3 *Because of the sauour of thy good ointmentes, thy name is as an oyntment powred out: therefore the virgins do loue thee.*

4 *Draw me, wee will runne after thee: the king hath brought me into his chamber, we will be glad & reioyce in thee, we will remember thy loue more then wine, the righteous do loue thee.*

5 *I am blacke O daughters of Ierusalem, but comely as the fruits of Kedar, & as the curtains of Salomon.*

6 *Regarde yee mee, not because I am blacke, for the Sunne hath looked vppon mee: the sonnes of my Mother were angrie with mee, they made mee the keeper*

keeper of the vines, but I kepte not mine owne vine.

7 *Shew me O thou whome my ſoule loueth, where thou feedeſt, where thou lyeſt at noone: why ſhould I bee as ſhee that turneth aſide to the flockes of thy companions?*

BEfore that I enter into the handling of theſe wordes, which I haue now read vnto you: it ſhall not bee amiſſe to ſpeake a few thinges in generall, touching this Song, that you may firſt looke vppon it, as vpon a goodlie rich peece of worke, but foulded vppe, and then afterwarde haue it vnfoulden & ſpread before your eyes, to the viewing of euerie part therof. Here be diuers perſons broght in vttering their partes in it, but eſpecially two, which are louers, betrothed each vnto the other. This is ſo clear and ſo euident by the words, that none can denie it. It is then, without all controuerſie, a ſong between a bridegrome and a bride, or a ſong of betrothinges, for it was the maner in olde time, to haue mariage ſonges and ſonges of eſpouſals. True it is, that this Bridegrome & this Bride are not named by any proper names in all this Song: but yet it is out of controuerſie, and as cleere as the Sunne who they bee, by that deſcription which is made of them, For he is deſcribed to bee a king and of that glory and maieſtie,

which

which no mortall creature hath: and her beauty and glorie alſo is ſet foorth to be ſuch, as far ſurmounteth all the glorie of this world. Then of neceſſitie it doth follow, that this Bridegrome is Ieſus Chriſt the Redeemer and Sauiour of the world, and this Bride is his Church. Theſe be the two vehement louers, which are here brought in. The holy ſcriptures in other places doo vſe theſe ſpeeches of Chriſt and his Church, as that they are betrothed, and ſhall be maried. For the Church is called *the Bride the Lambes wife*, Reuel. 21. verſ. 9. And the day of iudgement is called *the day of their mariage*, Reuel. 19. verſe 7. Alſo Iohn the Baptiſt, when ſome are diſpleaſed that Chriſt ſhould haue more honor then he, frameth this anſwere vnto them euen from this Song ſaying, *Hee that hath the bride is the bridegrome: but the friende of the bridegrome which ſtandeth and heareth him, reioyceth greatlie, becauſe of the bridegromes voice*, Iohn 3. verſe 29. Where you may ſee how hee calleth Chriſte the Bridegrome, his Church the Bride, and himſelfe the Bridegromes friende. Chriſt calleth himſelfe the Bridegrome, Marke 3. It was the auncient manner that the parties which ſhould bee man and wife were betrothed, & then after ſome diſtance of time the mariage was ſolemnized. Betweene the time of their betrothing and the mariage day, tokens of loue and kindnes did vſe to paſſe betweene them: but when they are maried the

wife

wife is receiued into the ſocietie of her husband, to be partaker with him of all his riches and poſſeſſions. The Lord Ieſus hath betrothed himſelfe to his holy ſpouſe the church, euen from the time of his promiſe made vnto Adam and Eue, *The ſeede of the woman ſhall breake the ſerpentes heade.* Geneſ. 3. The mariage betweene them ſhall bee ſolemnized *at the day of iudgement*, as I noted before, Reuel. 19. 7. Then ſhall ſhe be receiued to dwell with him in the heauens, and bee partaker of his riches and glorie. In the meane time, while ſhee is here in this world, he ſheweth great kindnes towardes her, comforteth, ſupporteth and defendeth her, beſtowing alſo manie goodlie gifts and ornamentes vpon her, & ſhe again for her part rendreth the tokens of her loue towardes him: and this ſong ſetteth forth al theſe thinges, which do paſſe thus betweene them. But you muſt note that all their ſpeeches is vnder an Allegorie, for when each of them doth praiſe the beautie and comelines of the other, looke what is beautifull, comelie or ſtatelie vnder heauen, it is brought in for to expreſſe the ſame. And to repreſent the ſpirituall and heauenly ornamentes and iewels which hee beſtoweth vppon her, and the fruites of her loue which ſhee rendreth vnto him for the ſame, here are reckoned vppe all the ſweeteſt, the richeſt, & the moſt precious thinges that are founde among men. There is but one bridegrome, and one bride: for all the elect from

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the beginning of the world vnto the ende, doe make but one holy Catholike Church, being all coupled together by one ſpirit, to make one bodie, whereof Chriſt is the head, but yet here are diuers perſons brought in beſides in this ſong, ſometime ſpeaking, and ſometime ſpoken vnto. Yea the bride ſpeaketh now and then of her mother, and of her little ſiſter. Here we muſt note, that it was the māner of old, that the bridegrome had yong men to be his companions, and ſo this bridegrome hath his companions or friends, not onely the holy Angels which miniſter vnto him for the ſeruice of his Church, Heb. 1. but alſo the Prophets, the Apoſtles, and all faithfull paſtors and teachers, as Iohn the Baptiſt termeth himſelfe one of his friendes. Alſo the bride had virgins to be her companions, and with theſe this ſpouſe of Chriſt is ſaid to bee alſo accompanied: theſe are called the daughters of Ieruſalem. And touching the other matter that ſhee hath a mother and a ſiſter, that may ſeeme ſomewhat harder to be vnderſtoode: for her mother is the true Church, & her little ſiſter alſo is the true Church, and yet but one true Church: how may this bee? This is eaſily anſwered: for it is the manner in the Hebrew tongue to call the whole the mother, and the parts of the whole are called daughters and ſiſters. Then marke this, that although there be but one vniuerſall Church; yet becauſe the ſame is neuer whole in the world at one time, the

whole Church vppon earth is ſaid to haue a mother, for ſhe is but a part of the vniuerſal Church. And then further, the Church vpon earth in Salomons time, did conſiſt of the nation of the Iewes: the Church of the Gentiles was not as then come, which is called her little ſiſter. Thus much may ſuffice touching this ſong in general, and now let vs come to the words of the text.

Theſe ſeauen verſes which I haue read vnto you, are firſt to be deuided into two parts, whereof the one is the generall title or inſcription of this whole booke contayned in one verſe: the other is the firſt ſpeech of the bride expreſſed in ſixe verſes following. As touching the title, it doth ſhew vnto vs two things: namely, that it is a Song of Songes, and that king Salomon did frame it and write it. The former ſpeech may be expounded two waies, as to ſay, it is all but one ſong, and yet it contayneth in it diuers ſongs. A ſong of ſongs, euen a ſong that conſiſteth of diuers ſongs: that is one way. Or rather after the vſuall phraſe of the Hebrew tongue, a ſong of ſongs, it is as much as to ſay, the principal or moſt excellent ſong of all others. This title then is giuen to commend vnto vs the worthines of it, to the end that wee may eſteeme of it accordinglie: but let vs ſee how farre the compariſon reacheth, that is, with what ſongs it is compared, whether it be ſaid to bee the moſt principall of all the ſongs which are in the holy Scriptures, or o

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thoſe onely which king Salomon made: for he made a thouſand and fiue, 1. King. 4. Now as this word (which) in our Engliſh tongue is vſed without difference of Number or Gender: ſo is the word *aſher* in the Hebrew tongue, that ſignifieth (which) in our tongue. Then if we ſhould tranſlate it in the plurall number and ſay thus, the ſong of ſongs which were Salomons, the compariſon ſhould be but in this manner, this is the principall or the moſt excellent ſong of all thoſe thouſand and fiue ſongs, which were Salomons. But if we take it in the ſingular number, and ſay thus: the ſong of ſonges, which was Salomons, then doth the compariſon ſtand generall, as if he ſhould ſay, this ſong which Salomon made, is the chiefe and the moſt worthy ſong of all other, which are ſet forth in the holy Scriptures. And this latter I take to bee right. There be many Pſalmes and many Songs in the ſacred Bible, which doe excell al other Songs that haue been in the world, and no one of them but is very pretious: yea this Song excelleth them all: for if a man vnderſtand it, hee ſhalbe forced to confeſſe, that there is not the like ſweetnes and comfort in any ſong. Seeing then that the holy Ghoſt hath thus praiſed it vnto vs, let vs giue all diligence to attaine to the true ſenſe and vnderſtanding of it, that we may haue the vſe of it to our ioy and comfort, as of a moſt pretious iewell. And when wee read that it was Salomons, wee

are not to ſtay in the man: but wee muſt conſider that hee was a Prophet, and ſo in this worke but the inſtrument and pen of the holy Ghoſt. It is not the word then of a man (though hee were the wiſeſt man,) but the word of God, and with ſuch a minde wee are to receiue it. Thus much touching the title or inſcription.

Let him kiſſe mee with the kiſſes of his mouth, &c. The bride doth begin this worthy ſong and (as you ſee) ſhee crieth out with a wonderfull deſire of her loue Chriſt to haue his preſence, and to bee imbraced of him, and to dwell with him. For all her ſpeech in theſe ſixe verſes tendeth to that one thing, ſauing that in the fift and ſixte verſe ſhee doth take away an obiection which may bee made againſt her, namely, that ſhee is blacke, and therefore nothing meete to bee the ſpouſe of ſuch a one as ſhee ſpeaketh of. But what? ſhall we take it then, that the Church doth firſt ſeeke after Chriſt, becauſe ſhe is firſt brought in after this vehement manner, crying out to bee with him? Doth not the holy Scripture teach the contrarie, and ſay plainely, *we loue him, becauſe he loued vs firſt?* 1. Ioh. 4. verſe 19. Yea, and if you marke well her ſpeeches, you may ſee that it is his loue towards her gone before, which drawet her thus earneſtly to ſeeke after him, She had fe his loue, and ſaith it is better then wine. Shee ha found the ſweetnes of his graces and heauenl gifts, and therefore (as ſhe confeſſeth) doth lou

him

him. Hee had let her ſee what rich treaſures hee hath layde vp in ſtore for her, and that enflameth her with a burning deſire to be ioyned with him. And now touching her manner of Phraſe. *Let him kiſſe mee with the kiſſes of his mouth*: wee ſee that this beginning is according to that allegorie vnder which the whole ſong is written. True louers which are betrothed, and haue promiſed marriage ech to the other, do with kiſſes expreſſe their loue. The Church then being betrothed vnto Chriſt, vnder this geſture of louers, expreſſeth her ardent deſire of a neerer preſence of him her ſpouſe, that he may imbrace her, and giue her yet greater tokens of his loue, yea bee ioyned moſt neerlie vnto her for euer. Where loue is hot, there be great paſſions in the minde, and the ſpeeches which do expreſſe the ſame are patheticall. Euen ſo here this holy bride, this chaſt and pure virgin, breaketh forth into her ſpeech with an exclamation, which is full of paſſions, not of naturall paſsions, but of ſpirituall loue and zeale, with which ſhee is enflamed, and euen as it were with an impatience deſireth a nearer coniunction with Chriſt. But let vs come yet more neerelie into the examination of her wordes, and more fullie to ſee her affection. You ſee that ſhee doth vehementlie deſire not onely to bee kiſſed of her ſpouſe, but alſo as ſhee ſaieth, *with the kiſſes of his mouth*. Here you muſt marke well, why ſhee calleth them the kiſſes of his mouth; for this is not a

ſuperfluous ſpeech. Out of his mouth proceedeth that ſacred word, which is the inſtrument whereby ſhe is ioyned vnto him. For by the liuely oracles he calleth her, hee lighteneth her, hee worketh faith in her, he armeth her againſt her enemies, he feedeth her: yea to ſpeake briefly, he conueyeth all his graces and all good things into her, euen by the ſame his word. No maruaile then though ſhe be enflamed with the deſire of the kiſſes of his mouth. From hence it is, that Dauid doth ſo highly commend the holy doctrine of the Lord, that it is perfect, pure and infallible and of ſuch worthy operation and effectes in the belieuers, that he ſaieth it is more to be deſired then gold, yea then much fine gold, ſweeter then the honie or the hony combe. Pſal. 19. But was the holy ſpouſe at any time without the worde? for ſhee ſeemeth to crie for that which ſhee had not. Chriſt did kiſſe his beloued Spouſe with ſome kiſſes of his mouth, euen from the beginning: for he did betroth himſelf vnto her by his word, his couenant, and promiſes, euen at the firſt. But marke how in his holy wiſedome hee hath diſpoſed the matter, ſo as he commeth neerer and neerer as it were by degrees, euen vnto the full and perfect coniunction. Adam and all the holy Fathers before the floud had his word and couenant, by which he did aſſure them of his loue and fauour vnto eternall ſaluation. He renewed his promiſe with Abraham, Izhak, and

Iaako

Iaakob. And after that the children of Iſrael were come out of the bondage of Egypt, he did more fully deliuer his lawes and ordinances vnto them by Moſes. But as yet all thinges were vnder figures and ſhadowes. Moſes and al the Prophetes did foreſhew, that in the fulnes of time the bridegroome himſelfe would come in his owne perſon and fulfil al thinges. Then commeth the cleare light of the Goſpel, and this is one of the kiſſes of his mouth, which ſhe ſo vehemently deſireth. Al the Patriarkes, Prophetes, and holy ones, did wonderfully long to ſee the bridegrome manifeſted in the fleſh. And therefore Chriſt telleth his Diſciples, ſaying. *Bleſſed are the eyes that ſee that yee ſee, For I tell you that many Prophets and Kinges haue deſired to ſee thoſe thinges which you ſee, and haue not ſeene them: and to heare thoſe thinges which you heare, and haue not heard them.* Luke 10. verſ. 24. This is (as I ſaide) one of the kiſſes of his mouth, which the holy ſpouſe did ſo vehemently deſire. And ſhee did know that there is yet a neerer kiſſe of his mouth, and that is when he ſhall ſay, *Come yee bleſſed of my Father, inherite the kingdome &c.* Matth. 25 And for this is now her moſt earneſt deſire. For as S. Iohn witneſſeth, *the ſpirite and the bride ſay, Come.* Reue. 22. 17. At the receyuing of this kiſſe ſhee ſhalbe ioyned with him for euermore: and therefore ſhe deſireth this day aboue al other. Here then wee may ſee, that while this holy virgin, the Lambes wife,

is here below vpon the earth, yet her heart is in the heauens, her ioye is with her beloued, vnto whome ſhee deſireth to be ioyned. Is this the true Church? What ſhal wee ſay then of them which are ſo worldly minded, that they neuer long after theſe kiſſes of the bridegrome? Are their affections ſet vpon heauenly thinges, as S. Paule requireth? Col. 3. Beloued, let euery man trie himſelfe: If yee feele the deſire to bee ioyned with Chriſt by a true and liuely faith, which is ingendred by his word, euen as it were by the kiſſes of his mouth, and that ye long to be with him in the heaueus, bleſſed are yee; worldlings haue no ſuch longing.

It followeth, *For thy loue is better then wine:* In theſe wordes ſhe rendreth a reaſon of that her moſt vehement deſire which ſhee hath to be ioyned with him. The ſumme of it is, that his loue wherewith he hath loued her firſt, is ſo ſweet and comfortable, as that it is beyond all compariſon: Shee ſaith it is better then wine, and wine is a very pretious thing, which is (as the ſcripture ſaith) giuen to comfort mans heart. Pſal. 104. And becauſe wine is as a principall thing in banquets, it is here put for all the daintie, delicate, ſweete and comfortable or coſtly things in the world, which the greateſt kinges do vſe in feaſts and banquets. Sweete and daintie they be indeed vnto the carnall man: and while the children of this worlde doe ſeeke very greedily to fill and ſtuffe themſelues

ſelues with the ſame, repoſing their chiefe felicitie and comfort therein: the holy ſpouſe ſheweth plainely that ſhe deſpiſeth theſe earthly dainties, and that the loue of Chriſt is ſweeter vnto her then they all. The delicate perſons which follow their pleaſures, and haue their fine muſicke and their ſweete wines, finde not ſuch delight and comfort in their banquetting, as ſhe doth in the loue of her ſpouſe Ieſus Chriſt. Then you ſee how her ſpeech ſtandeth: ſhe crieth out with deſire to be with him, rendring this reaſon, that his loue is better vnto her, then all the ſweete and dainty things that princes haue here in the world. How commeth it that this loue of Chriſt is ſo ſweete vnto her? or as ſhee ſpeaketh in the plurall number, thy loues, becauſe his loue is the principall of all. It is from hence, that ſhe knoweth he would giue himſelfe for her, that hee might ſanctifie her, and clenſe her by the waſhing of water through the word, that hee might make her vnto himſelfe a glorious Church, not hauing ſpot or wrinckle, &c. Ephe. 5. verſe 25. 26. 27. The whole number of the elect were in themſelues vnder the thraldome of ſinne and condemnation, and ſhould all haue gone to hell, but that as Saint Iohn ſaieth, hee loued vs, and waſhed vs from our ſinnes in his blood, and made vs kings & Prieſtes to God his Father, Reue. 1. verſe 5. 6 Is not here a ſweete loue, which is better (as ſhee ſaith) then wine? This loue did Moſes feele through faith,

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and it cauſed him to refuſe to be called the ſonne of Pharaos daughter, and choſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God then to enioye the pleaſures of ſinne for a ſeaſon, eſteeming the rebuke of Chriſt greater riches then the treaſures of Egypt, Heb. 11. This loue did S. Paule (who before was a blaſphemer and a perſecutor) feele the ſweetnes of it, and it cauſed him, as a man crucified to the world, to deſpiſe all earthly treaſures, and to ſay, I deſire to bee diſſolued and to be with Chriſt. We read of a woman in the goſpell, which waſhed the feete of our Lorde with teares, and wiped them with the hayres of her head, ſhe loued much, for in the aboundance of his loue, ſhe felt that he had forgiuen her manie ſinnes. And doubtles euery ſoule, which through a true and liuely faith doth apprehend the forgiuenes of ſinnes in his blood, crieth out, *Let him kiſſe me with the kiſſes of his mouth, for thy loue is better then wine.*

It followeth, *Becauſe of the ſauour of thy good oyntementes, thy name is as an oyntement powred out, therefore the virgins doe loue thee.* In this verſe ſhe rendreth a reaſon, why her heart is ſo ſet vpon him, and why ſhe doth ſo loue him, that in compariſon of him, ſhe renounceth all the glory and riches, and pleaſures of this world, vtterly deſpiſing them as droſſe and vanitie. Her reaſon is drawne from the excellencie of her beloued: that he is full of ſweet things, by which he doth perfume

perfume her, and ſo maketh her ſweete alſo. For that which giueth the ſweeteſt ſauour, maketh a man to couet moſt after it. Her ſpeech wherewith ſhe ſetteth forth the commendation of his ſweetnes, is framed according to the figures of the law. God commaunded Moſes to make a pretious ointment, and therewith to annoint the tabernacle and the miniſtring veſſels, alſo Aaron and his ſonnes, Exod. 30. And as it is in Pſa. 133. This ointmẽt was powred vpon the head of Aaron, and went down to the skirts of his clothing. Hereby was figured the annointing of the Sonne of God our Lord Ieſus with the holy Ghoſt, according as it is written, the ſpirit of the Lord is vpõ me, becauſe he hath annointed me, Eſa. 61. He is therfore Chriſt, euẽ the Lords annointed, he in our nature, that is in the manhood, as the head ouer the whole church, hath receiued the fulnes of al graces, as it is written, that God gaue not the ſpirit to him by meaſure, Io. 3. ver. 34. And that it pleaſed the Father, that in him all fulnes ſhould dwel, Colo. 1. 19: Here is then the veſſell, which as the rich treaſurie is full of all heauenlie and moſt ſweete graces, euen the man Ieſus Chriſt. But marke how the bride doth proceede further in this matter. If a ſweete ointment be cloſed vp in a veſſell, it remaineth ſweet within it ſelfe, and within the veſſell, the ſauour of it is little felt to thoſe that come neare it, but when it is powred forth, then the ſweetnes thereof doth

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ſpreade and perfume all. We reade in the goſpel of a woman which had a boxe of verie coſtlie ointment of ſpikenarde, and ſhee brake the boxe and poured the ointment vpon the head of Ieſus as he ſate at table, Marke 14. verſe 3. and the houſe was filled with the ſauour of the oyntement, Iohn 12. verſe 3. So, marke how ſhe ſpeaketh here, *At the ſauour of thy good oyntmentes, thy name is as an oyntment powred out*: For by this ſhe ſheweth that the bridegrome her welbeloued doth not as a cloſe veſſell keepe into himſelfe thoſe ſweete graces wherewith he is annointed, but that they are in deepe powred forth vpon her, to annoint her, and to make her ſweete alſo: The graces of Chriſt which are here called his ſweete oyntments are powred forth indeede, and doe flow from him the head into all partes of his miſtical body, that is to ſay, vpon all the members of his Church, which being made partakers of his annointing, and called Chriſtians: as it is written of his fulnes wee all receiue, euen grace for grace, Iohn 1. verſe 16. But marke now how his name is an ointment powred forth: Hee fulfilled all righteouſnes Matth. 3. verſe 15. He offered himſelfe by his eternall ſpirite without ſpot vnto God, Heb. 9. verſe 14. He hath by his ſacrifice of himſelfe, euen by the blood of his croſſe, appeaſed the wrath of his Father, and made reconciliation for the ſinnes of the world He doth cloath all his elect with his owne holines, he doth

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ſlay ſinne in them, and repleniſheth them with the vertues and graces of his ſpirite, thus is his name as a pretious oyntment powred out. And therefore (ſaith ſhee) the virgins doe loue thee. When Chriſt crucified is preached, when the vertue and power of his death and reſurrection are ſhewed, when all his graces are diſplayed and laide open, then is, as it were, the boxe of the good oyntmentes broken, and his name is as an oyntment powred forth, then is there a moſt ſweeet ſauour, which cauſeth the virgins to loue him. Thus you ſee that the ſweetnes of his graces and heauenly gifts powred forth vpon her, haue enflamed her heart with this vehement loue and deſire to be with him. All men are by nature vncleane, filthie, ſtinking and loathſome: but all doe not ſo well perceiue it, onely the regenerate doe come to the true ſenſe of the loathſome ſauour of their ſinnes, and feele that they are made ſweete by his ſweete oyntmenets, and theſe are they that doe loue him. But how is this? that ſhee ſaieth the virgins doe loue him? Is there any other virgin that doth loue Chriſt beſides her ſelfe? Is not ſhee alone his ſpouſe, and the onely chaſt and pure one? Who then bee theſe virgins that ſhee ſpeaketh of? They bee her daughters, they be her companions, they be her ſelfe. For though ſhe be but one, if wee reſpect the whole body, yet becauſe ſhee conſiſteth of many, euen of all the elect, ſhee ſpeaketh alſo of her

herſelfe as of many. She is a chaſt virgin, and euery faithfull ſoule is a chaſt virgin vnto Chriſt. Saint Paule ſaith, he was ielous ouer the Church of Corinth with a godly ielouſie: for I haue (ſaith he) coupled you to one man, to preſent you a chaſt virgin vnto Chriſt. 2. Cor. 11. ver. 2. Theſe virgins be all the chaſt worſhippers of God. Reuel. 14. ver. 4. Theſe onely do ſmel the ſweete ſauour of Chriſt. The worldlinges, whome the Scripture calleth adulterers, and adultereſſes, Iam. 4. ver. 4. becauſe they do by giuing their heart to the world, euen to vnclean luſtes of the fleſh, commit ſpiritual whoredome againſt God, are drowned and ouerwhelmed in the ſtinke of filthy vncleannes, & cannot ſmel the ſweet ointments of Chriſt: and therefore they do not, nor cannot loue him.

In the next verſe ſhe ſaieth: *Draw mee, wee will runne after thee: the King hath brought mee into his Chambers, wee will bee glad and reioyce in thee, wee will remember thy loue more then wine, the righteous doe loue thee.* Here ſhee vttereth ſtill her vehement affections, and deſire to bee with her Chriſt, in diuers ſpeeches, which wee will handle briefly as they lie. We haue ſeene by her former ſpeeches, that by his loue towardes her, and by the ſweetnes of his graces powred forth vpon her, ſhee is ſo enflamed with loue of him, and with the deſire of being ioyned vnto him, that in heart and mind and affection ſhee mounteth

teth vp aboue the heauens, deſpiſing all thinges here below vnder the Sunne, eyther riches, pleaſures or glorie, as meere traſh and vanitie. Her bridegrome is farre beyonde them all in price and dignitie, he is her only treaſure and ioy. This (I ſay) we haue ſeene by her ſpeech, and now is it come to this, that ſhee ſaieth, *Draw mee, wee will runne after thee?* Alas good virgin, hath ſhee ſo great a deſire to runne after him, her onely ioy in whome ſhe knoweth is all felicitie, and doe not her legs ſerue? Doth her ſtrength fayle? or doth ſhe faint in the race? Doth ſhee deſire moſt vehemently, and yet cannot performe? Yea verily it is euen ſo. This is her eſtate. Shee doth plainly confeſſe her frailtie, and the feebleneſſe of her knees, that ſhe cannot runne after him, except he draw her. What ſhould bee the reaſon of this? Surely her race is vpward, and ſhe hath a burden vpon her that preſſeth her downe. Yea all the virgins, all her daughters, al her companions haue their load vpon them. Though they loue Chriſt, yet they cannot continue their race after him any faſter then he ſhall draw them. If hee ceaſe drawing, they giue ouer running. If you will demaund what it is which doth ſo burden and preſſe downe, ſo clog and hamper the feete, and make the knees ſo feeble: the holy Ghoſt doth tell you, if you will reade, Heb. 12. verſ. 1. The ſpirit and grace of God doth draw, but the corruption of our nature in euery one doth euen

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ſtriue to quench the ſpirit. Therefore the holie Apoſtle ſaieth, the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, ſo that you cannot doe what you would. Gala. 5. The ſame doctrine he teacheth, Romaines 7. And Chriſt Ieſus ſaid to his Apoſtles: *The ſpirit is willing, but the fleſh is weake.* Matth. 26. verſe 41. And no man (ſaith he) commeth vnto me, except the Father that ſent me, doe draw him. Ioh. 6. Marke well this prayer of the holy ſpouſe: for thereby you may ſee plainely, how contrary ſhe is to that bold and impudent ſtrumpet, the Whore of Babel, euen that idolatrous Church of Rome, which maintaineth with ſharpe argumentes, euen with fire and ſword, that men haue free wil and power of themſelues, being once aſſiſted by grace, to runne vnto Chriſt. The filthy harlot condemneth this holy virgin of hereſie, becauſe ſhee wil not herein ioyne with her: Indeede that wicked whore ſayth, that mans will is ſo enfeebled, that without grace it can doe nothing, but preuented and holpen, and as it were ſet on foote by grace, ſhe ſaith, it can and doth performe all thinges. Marke (I ſay) how the Bride doth here gainſay her: for ſhe had receyued grace, ſhe had runne, and doth runne, and craueth his graces that ſhe may runne ſtil, yea and that ſhe may runne faſter, and runne to the end. It is not then (brethren) as thoſe falſe ſpirits do beare men in hand, that man is but maimed and halfe dead, and being ſet vp, and ſupported by grace, can runne then of himſelfe

himselfe. Nay there must be grace vpon grace stil euen to the end. Hereupon the faithful soules feeling how they bee stil euen yoked with the remnants of sinne, and crying day and night vnto the Lord Iesus to quicken them, and to strengthen them, and to draw them by his liuely word and holy spirit, that they may runne after him, do farre differ from those proud hypocrites which glory in themselues, that they can runne, and can doe what they lust.

It followeth, *The King brought mee into his chambers, &c.* The words which follow doe shew that this clause should rather be translated thus: When the king shall bring me into his chambers: for she speaketh of a ioy and gladnes which shal follow thereupon. This is out of doubt, that he had before this time brought her into his chambers; for shee speaketh of a thing with which she was not vnacquainted. For such here among men as did betroth themselues, doe willinglie make knowne vnto them, to whome they are betrothed, what riches and treasures they haue in store for them to possesse, when they shal come to be their wiues. So our Lord Iesus Christ, hauing betrothed himselfe vnto his Church, had from time to time, euen from the beginning led her into his chambers, and shewed her what treasures, riches and glorie he hath laid vp for her in the heauens. Kings haue the greatest treasures

vppon earth, and the richeſt ornamentes in their chambers: this king that ſhee ſpeaketh of is the greateſt of all kinges, and all the riches of the kinges of this world are but droſſe in compariſon of thoſe which he hath laid vp, and reſerueth in the heauenly manſions for his beloued Spouſe. True it is, that ſhe hath had but a glimmering of them, and therefore ſtill coueteth to ſee them more fullie: and her bridegrome hath opened them vnto her more fullie at ſome time then at other. He led her into the chambers in the time of the law, and opened his treaſures vnto her, to ſhew her the riches and glorie of his kingdome, which ſhee ſhall inherite with him: but this hee hath done more fullie vnder the Goſpell, ſince he was manifeſted in the fleſh: and moſt fullie it ſhall be done at the day of the marriage, when he ſhall receiue her home vnto him to dwell with him in the heauens for euer. But here it may be demaunded, how he leadeth her into his chambers, that is into the heauens, while ſhe is yet in the earth? You muſt vnderſtand that this leading is ſpirituall: he doth giue vnto her an eye of faith, by which ſhee beholdeth the inuiſible heauenlie riches and treaſures of life. His word layeth them open, and his ſpirit giueth the ſight, as the holie Apoſtle teacheth ſaying: *The eye hath not ſeene, and the eare hath not heard, neither haue entred into the heart of man the thinges which God hath prepared*

pared for them that loue him. But God hath reuealed them vnto vs by his ſpirit. 1. Cor. 2. 9. 10. You ſee then that it is the holie ſpirit, by which the Bridegrome leadeth the Bride into his chambers, to ſhew what thinges he hath prepared for her, which ſpirit dealeth not without the word. Then beholde what is added, *We will reioyce and bee glad in thee &c.* Here is ſpirituall ioy, here is mirth and gladnes which followeth vppon the ſight of the heauenly treaſures. Take a virgin which is betrothed vnto ſome great Prince, and leade her into his chambers, and ſhew vnto her all his rich ornamentes and glorie, aſſuring her that all is kept for her, will it not make her to reioyce and be glad? will not her mind be much affected with the loue of ſuch a husband? This virgin is led into the heauenly chambers, & there is ſhewed vnto her the glorie and riches of the life to come, which ſhe ſhall poſſeſſe: how is it poſſible then, but that ſhee ſhould bee euen repleniſhed with ioy and gladnes? How can it bee otherwiſe, but that ſhe ſhall mention his loue (as ſhe ſaith) more then wine? Is there any thing in this world, which will not ſeeme vile vnto her in compariſon? Yea, will not ſhe (that is to ſay, euen all the righteous) loue him, magnifie him, extol and praiſe him, and his loue? Some of the children of this world, when the Goſpel is preached, are a little lightened, and doe as it were peepe in

at the dores of theſe chambers of the Bridegrome, and haue a little dimme ſight of the riches and glorie, and are a little moued therewith for the time vnto ioy and gladnes: but the pleaſures and cares of this world, which are deepelie ſeated in their heartes, do put out al again. Their faith, their hope, and their ioy in heauenly things doe vaniſh, and they lay hold of thinges tranſitorie. Beloued, let vs take heede that wee be not ſuch, let vs not in our vncleannes ſtand without to peepe in at the dores, and away; but let vs endeuour to be of theſe pure virgins, and ſo with our holy mother be led into the chambers, that wee may throughly view the heauenly treaſures there laid vp, and be aſſured that they be kept for vs and ſo reioyce (as S. Peter ſayeth) *with ioye vnſpeakeable and glorious*, 1. Pet. 1. verſ. 4. 5. 8. for then ſhal wee mention his loue more then wine, then ſhall we deſpiſe al things here below, and we ſhal loue him. Wel, let vs come now vnto her next ſpeech.

I am blacke, O daughters of Ieruſalem, but comely, &c. Now ſhe commeth to take away the obiection which may bee made againſt her after this manner. It falleth out ſometimes, that ſome doe loue them which doe not loue them againe. Thou art wrapt with a vehement loue, but is not towards ſuch a one as careth not for thee? for thou ſetteſt him forth to bee a glorious king,

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ſo rich and ſo ful of ſweet things, as that nothing vnder heauen is any thing comparable vnto him. Thou art not fit to bee the wife of ſuch an one: how ſhould he loue thee? for thou art blacke. Is it not meete that ſo goodly a king ſhould haue a right beautifull Queene? How can ſhee anſwere this? Shee doth anſwere it fully. Firſt, confeſſing that ſhe is black indeed. I know that I am blacke but yet withal I am comly, I am welfauoured. Thē ſhe vſeth two compariſons: the one to ſhew her blacknes, the other to ſet forth her comelines. Touching the firſt compariſon, our tranſlation ſayth, *as the fruits of* Kedar: but the words are, *as the tents of* Kedar. They were men which in hote countries kept cattell, and remouing from place to place, dwelt in boothes and tentes. The other compariſon is in theſe wordes, *as the curtaines or the hanginges of* Salomon. Now wee muſt knowe that in both theſe there is a figuratiue ſpeech: for by the tentes and the curtaines are vnderſtoode thoſe that dwell in them. As if ſhee ſhould ſay, I am blacke indeede, as the men in the tents of Kedar which are ſunne-burnt; but yet I am comely, as they that dwell in the Courte of Salomon, For theſe curtaines are all the hanginges, yea by them is vnderſtoode all the whole glorie of Salomons Court. Wee reade in the holy Scriptures that there was no glorie in the worlde comparable to the glory of King Salomon. The Queene

of Saba was astonished when shee beheld it. If the spirituall comlines and beautie of the spouse of Christ, now in the time of her frailtie and imperfection, bee comparable with Salomon in all his royaltie, yea doe exceede him: what shall her beautie be, when all her blacknes shall be taken away, and Christ shall wash her, and make her a glorious Church not hauing spot or wrinckle? Ephes. 5.

But now where as she confesseth that shee is blacke, is it not some cause to impayre her dignity, or may she not iustly for the same bee the lesse esteemed? No, for she doth answere to that, shewing that her blacknes is not natiue, it is not according to her spirituall birth, it is accidentary, it is but for a time, she is but sun-burnt, *Looke not vpon me* (saith shee) *that I am somewhat black, for the sunne hath shined vppon mee*. A notable place to teach vs to take heede how wee esteeme the Church of Christ: for many haue despised her, reproached and forsaken her, because shee is blacke. It hath been their vtter destruction, that they could not looke into her inwarde beautie, and put a difference betweene her present estate of frailtie and imperfection, and that perfect beautie vnto which she shall come. This admonition which she gineth, is right necessarie at all times for her weake daughters, least they bee offended & forsake her for her blacknes: but there

is then an other queſtion ariſeth: why ſhould ſhee be ſun-burnt? If ſhe bee ſo great a Queene, the darling of a moſt high and glorious King, what occaſion hath ſhe to impayre her beauty? To this ſhe anſwereth, that it is a cruell violence, and a ſpitefull iniury offered vnto her, and that by ſuch as of all other ought leaſt ſo to deale with her. Shee vſeth this ſimilitude, as if a yong beautifull virgin dwelling in her mothers houſe, had churliſh and rough fellowes to her brethren, who in anger thruſt her out at dores to keepe the vines, and ſo ſhe is compelled to be in the ſunne, and to be ſun-burnt. And ſo ſhee ſaith, *that her mothers ſonnes were angrie with her, and made her the keeper of the vines*. It is a moſt cleare caſe that the holy Church, and all her perfecteſt children doe want of the perfect beauty while they liue here, and are ſomewhat blacke, partly through ſinnes which doe remaine in them, and partlie through afflictions. I neede not ſtande to proue this, being a matter ſo euident. But herein is ſome difficultie, who they bee whome ſhee calleth her mothers ſonnes. Some haue taken it that ſhe calleth originall ſinne, euen all the concupiſcences of the fleſh, which are in all the elect from the wombe, her mothers ſonnes: for by theſe ſhee is forced to commit many ſinnes, which dimme her beautie, and to omit the doing her dutie in part for her owne vine, ſhee ſaith ſhee did not keepe,

wherein the true beautie consisteth. All this is true, and according to that which Saint Paule speaketh of himselfe, Rom. 7. But I doe not see how concupiscences can be called the sonnes of her mother; for in this song she calleth the church that was of former time her mother, Shee doth not (as I take it) speake of any mother but one. I take it therefore rather, that shee calleth the degenerate children her mothers sonnes. They be borne in the Church, they bee descended of the holy ones, they bee by outward profession the children of the true Church, but she calleth them not the sonnes of God, nor yet her brethren, for they be very bastardes and degenerate children. Such were the wicked priestes and false Prophets in time of the law, such haue beene all the Heretikes, popish Prelates, and sects of idolatrous and superstitious orders vnder the Gospell. All these haue arrogantly challenged to thēselues the honour and dignitie of Gods Church, and with wrath and furie haue offered violence vnto the true spouse of Christ, whereof shee here complaineth. It would be a matter ouer long and tedious for mee to rehearse what persecutions and afflictions these haue laid vpon the Church, and what desolations and deformities, they haue brought vpon her. True it is, that God by these hath afflicted and chastised his chosen people for their sinnes. Then we see why shee is somewhat

black,

blacke, and it ſtandeth vs vpon that we take heed we deſpiſe her not for the ſame, Howſoeuer ſhee ſeemeth to the eyes of the world, to bee baſe and farre vnmeete for ſuch a bridegrome, yet is ſhee beautifull in his eyes, and he will rid her and ſet her free from all infirmities, and from the violence of her cruell foes, he will make her to ſhine in perfect beautie and glorie: yea ſhee ſhall bee bright as the ſunne in the firmament.

Now ſhee turneth her ſpeech againe vnto her beloued (that it may appeare he regardeth her) praying moſt earneſtly vnto him, that hee will ſhew her where hee feedeth, and where hee cauſeth his flocke to lie downe at noone (for ſo the wordes are to be tranſlated) ſhewing that if hee doe not, it would not be for his honour, nor for her good. For the ſenſe of this, firſt you know that Chriſt is the great ſhepheard, and therefore the Church on earth ſeeketh onely after him to be fed. For when ſhee calleth vpon him to ſhew her where he feedeth his ſheepe, it is to this end that he will feed her as he fed the flockes of former times, for ſhee knoweth that there is but one true ſhepheard, who feedeth all his ſheepe with the ſame paſture: ſhe looketh for no wholeſome foode, vnles it bee with the auntient Churches. Then next, it was the manner of the ſhepheardes in thoſe hote countries to driue their ſheepe in the heate of the day, vnto a place of ſhadowe, where

where they might lie downe and refreſh them in that time of the parching heat. The bride craueth inſtantlie of him whome ſhe loueth moſt entirelie, that hee will ſhew vnto her the place where hee cauſeth his flocke to lie downe at noone. The ſumme of her requeſt is, that hee will not onely as her great ſhepheard, feed her with his wholeſome foode of life, but alſo that hee will refreſh her, as it were in the ſhadow, when the ſunne ſhineth hoteſt, that is, when perſecutions, be the greateſt. For by the parching heate of the ſunne, is meant the heate of perſecution as our Sauiour teacheth, Matth. 13. A moſt worthie place to be noted; that the true Church doth not onely depend vppon Chriſt Ieſus alone for her foode, reiecting all doctrines of men, but alſo is in the middeſt of the hotteſt perſecutions refreſhed by him. When tyrants doe rage, you would thinke that the poore Church were neglected of him, as moſt wretched and moſt miſerable: but it is nothing ſo: for euen then doth he refreſh her in his comfortable ſhadow: for the faithfull receyuing the comforter whome he ſendeth, Iohn 16. Doo reioyce in afflictions, Rom. 5. verſ. 3. And when they haue trouble in the world, they haue peace in Chriſt, Iohn 16. verſe 33. Beholde the wonderfull power of the Lord vnto thoſe whom he feedeth. Men are afraide to profeſſe the goſpell, becauſe of the cruell perſecutors, and ſo they

they doe account it a safety to flie from Christe: the holy Church is contrary, shee doth not seeke how shee may deale couertly, and so auoide perill, but openly approacheth vnto Christ, knowing that he can and will refresh her, euen when the sunne shineth hotest. Let vs then seeke with our mother, and cleaue to Christ, for hee hath a layer, at noone he will refresh vs, and make vs in him to lie down in peace, euen in the middest of the burning flames. All the holy Martyrs which suffered for the Gospell doo testifie this thing: why should we then be afraide? Then touching the reason which she addeth, that if hee doo not shew her where he feedeth, and also refresh her in the heate, such is her frailtie that she shall decline and ioyne with false worshippers; and that would not be to his honour, nor to her good. Why (saith shee) *should I bee as one that turneth aside to the flockes of thy companions?* Or as it may well bee translated, as one that pitcheth or spreadeth her tent by the flockes of thy companions. That the faithfull doo worship God aright in spirite and trueth, Ioh. 4. and doe not ioyne with idolaters, they haue it not of themselues, but from hence, that they bee all taught of God. Iohn 6. verse 45. But if shee speake here of idolatrous flockes, vnto whome she shal turne, if Christ do not teach her, then the Maisters of false worship are called the companions of Christ, is not that a dignitie

dignitie ouer great for ſuch wicked men? For anſwere vnto this we muſt note that ſhe doth not cal them, ſo giuing vnto them thereby anie dignitie, but rather noting thereby what wicked vſurpers they be. For Chriſt is the onely maiſter, the onely ſhepheard, the onely teacher of the true worſhip of God: and all ſuch as ſet vp a worſhip and a doctrine of their owne, aduaunce themſelues euen to be his companions. Such a companion is the Pope, for hee doth take vpon him to frame a religion, and ſtandeth to maintaine that it is of equall authoritie with the religion of Chriſt. But wee are taught here to ſeeke vnto the Lord Ieſus, that hee may ſhew vnto vs where he feedeth his flocke, that wee may ioyne with the ſame, and bee fed by him, and ſo kept, that we decline not to the flockes of ſuch companions. The Lorde giue vs that grace. Amen.

Let vs pray.

The

THE SECOND SERMON.

Chap. I.

8 *If thou know not, O thou fayreſt among women, get thee forth by the ſteps of the flocke, and feede thy kids by the tents of the ſhepheardes.*

9 *I haue compared thee my loue, vnto the troupe of horſes in the chariots of Pharaoh.*

10 *Thy cheekes are comely with rowes of ſtones, and thy necke with chaines.*

11 *Wee will make thee borders of golde with ſtuds of ſiluer.*

12 *While the King was at his repaſte, my ſpikenarde gaue the ſmell thereof.*

13 *My welbeloued is as a bundle of mirrhe vnto me, he ſhall lodge betweene my breaſtes.*

14 *My welbeloued is as a cluſter of Camphire vnto me in the vines of Engedie.*

15 *My loue, behold thou art faire, beholde thou art faire, thine eyes are like the doues.*

16 *My welbeloued, behold thou art faire and pleaſant, alſo our bed is greene.*

17 The

17. *The beames of our house are Cedars, the rafters are of Firrh.*

THe speeches of the bride seeking after her Welbeloued, are past in the former part of this chapter; and now we shall heare what the Bridegrome sayth, for he answereth in foure verses, and then each doth commend the other by course. Her last request which she made vnto him was this: that *hee would shew her where he feedeth, and where hee causeth the flocke to lie downe at noone*. And vnto this hee doth frame his first speech in most kinde and louing manner, thus: *If thou knowe not* (saith he) *O thou fayrest among women*. The very forme of his speech doth seeme to importe thus much: That it is a strange thing, that shee doth not know where he feedeth his flocke: for hath he not from the beginning fed his Church, so as the Church hath knowne how and where he hath fed her? Yes doubtles, but yet the false teachers haue oftentimes so preuailed, and haue so confidetly challenged to themselues the name and title of the true Church, and the true knowledge hath beene oftentimes so darkened that the poore sheepe of Christ haue not known almost which way to turne them, being in danger of ioyning themselues to the flockes of those companions, but that they haue had their refuge in flying vnto Christ to be taught the trueth by him.

him. Partly indeed (as it cannot bee denied) by negligence those things come to passe: but Christ doth not vpbraid her with that, but doth verie readily instruct her, as we shall see in that which followeth. Then further that he calleth her, *the fayrest among women*, you may see how beautifull and comely shee is in his sight. Howsoeuer shee seemeth in her own eyes to be blacke (as all the faithful are priuie to their own deformities) and howsoeuer others do despise her while they doe esteeme her to be voide of beautie: yet vnto Christ she is the fayrest of all other. Great flocks there haue beene in the world of sundrie professions, and goodly glory and external ornaments they haue beene decked withal: but their beautie in the eyes of the Lord, is nothing comparable to the beautie of his spouse, who is base in outward shew, but yet by her spiritual ornamentes she excelleth them all, so that hee calleth her *the fayrest among women*. This is a wonderful comfort vnto euery faithful soule, when the Diuel in time of temptation shal suggest after this manner: Thou art spotted and defiled with many sinnes and offences: thou art foule, thou art black, thou art deformed: how should the most holie and glorious Lord Iesus delight in thee? Consider thy self, what reason hast thou to think that thou shalt be married vnto him? Yea what shoulde perswade thee, that he regardeth thy praiers? that the voice of Christ is this: *O thou fayrest among*

Women

women. What would we haue more? when wee are ſo full of deformities, yet faire in his eyes. But how then? is that which is blacke faire in the eyes of Chriſt? No verily, for he can approue nothing that is vncleane; but he beholdeth the beautie of his ſpouſe ſo farre as ſhe is regenerate and decked with vertues: and as for her blacknes and deformities, they ſhall bee wholy taken away. So hee beholdeth her iuſtified and ſanctified in himſelf. And thus much touching his kind ſpeech: and now let vs ſee what anſwere he maketh vnto her requeſt. Shee doth entreate him of all loue to ſhew her where he feedeth his flocke, that ſhee may ioyne her ſelfe there to bee fed with them, vnder him, and by him her onely ſhepheard. And marke what he biddeth her doe, that ſhe may obtaine her deſire herein. *Go forth* (ſaith hee) *by the ſteps of the flocke, and feede thy kiddes by the tentes of the ſhepheardes*. Is this the way to finde him where he feedeth, and where he cauſeth his flock to lie downe at noone? Is this a ſufficient anſwere to her requeſt? Yea doubtles, Chriſt anſwereth her deſire to the full: let vs therefore conſider the ſenſe of his wordes, for they inſtruct vs in a moſt waightie matter. Some doe tranſlate them thus: *Seeing thou knoweſt not, O thou fayreſt among women, goe forth, ſtay not in the footeſteppes of that flocke, and feede thy* Kids *aboue the tentes of other ſhepheardes*. As if he ſhould will her to come away from thoſe flockes of his companions, as ſhe called

ſhe called them, and not walke in their waies: for albeit they in their blinde deuotion pretend to worſhip God, yet indeed they worſhip diuels. And ſeeing the doctrines and religions of thoſe companions be from mans inuention, and ſo are of the earth here below, yea euen from the pit of hell, ſhe muſt feede her kids aboue the tentes of thoſe other ſhepheardes, ſhe muſt leade them into the heauenly paſtures. This is a godly ſenſe, but I doe not ſee how the wordes will beare it in this place. Indeed the prepoſition, *gnal*, ſignifieth indifferently, aboue, vpon, or beſide, as to ſay aboue the tents, or beſide the tents. But in the other wordes there is a very hard eclipſe, when the wordes are plainely ſet downe thus, *goe forth in the ſteps of the flocke*, to ſay, *goe forth, ſtay not, or walke not in the ſteps of the flocke*. And moreouer wee are to note that in her vehement ſuit vnto Chriſt he would ſhew her where hee feedeth, ſhee ſaith, *Why ſhoulde I bee as one that turneth aſide to the flockes of thy companions?* Shee ſaith not to the flocke. The falſe worſhippers bee many flockes, and ſo ſhe calleth them: for they differ in their religion each from other. If Chriſt then had ſpoken of theſe, he would haue called them flockes, as ſhe did, and not a flocke. He woulde haue ſaid, goe forth, walke not in the ſteps of thoſe flockes which thou ſpeakeſt of. The true Church indeed conſiſteth of many ſeuerall flocks, if wee reſpect the diuerſitie of times and places: but if wee re-

ſpect the vnitie of their faith, and how they be made one miſticall bodie of Chriſt, they bee all but one flocke. Againe, we finde in the holy Scriptures, that hypocrites & counterfeyte worſhippers are called goates, yea, they bee euen heardes of ſwine, or rather of wolues, & ſuch like cruell beaſtes, wee find them not called ſheepe, as the Lordes people are called his ſheepe. Now in this place the words do ſtand thus: goe forth in the ſteps of the ſheepe. I take it therefore verie cleere, that he ſpeaketh of the people of God, ſaying; *go forth in the ſteps of the ſheepe*. If thou wilt finde me where I doe feede my ſheepe, that thou maiſt ioyn with them to become one flock, goe forth in their ſteps, and feede thy kids by the tents of the ſhepheards. Here is the way for all the faithfull to finde where the greate ſhepheard of the ſheepe our Lord Ieſus feedeth his flocke: then let vs conſider diligently of it, that we may follow his direction. It is the Church which maketh her praier, that he would ſhew vnto her where he feedeth. What flocke doth he feede beſides the Church? Is not ſhee his onely flocke? What other ſheepe then are thoſe whoſe ſteps ſhe muſt trace to find where he feedeth? Indeed the Church is but one, and Chriſt feedeth none other flock beſides her: but you muſt obſerue, that this is the prayer of the Church euer vppon earth: *Shew mee, O thou whome my ſoule loueth, where thou feedeſt*. And there be which were

vpon

vpon earth in former time, which are gone out of the world. Theſe are the ſheep in whoſe ſteps he willeth her to goe foorth: and by the ſteps of theſe ſhe ſhall come to find where the wholeſome paſture is. The caſe ſtandeth thus: There is but one true faith, one holy religion, and worſhip of God, one pure doctrine, one ſpirituall foode or paſture for all that come to life. Although it hath not beene deliuered at all times alike, or vnder one forme: for the Fathers vnder the Law had all vnder figures and ſhadowes, which the Goſpell layeth open clearely. Hereupon it followeth, that when there ariſe Sectmaiſters, Heretikes, and falſe teachers, which draw flocks of Diſciples after them, and each company boaſteth that they be the true Church, and now the faithful in the middeſt of theſe confuſions, crie out vnto Chriſt to ſhew them where he doth feed: his direction is this; goe forth in the ſteps of the ſheep, looke into the wayes of the ancient Churches, looke what doctrine and what religion they profeſſed, looke what ſhepheardes fed them, ioyne your ſelues to the tents of the ſame ſhepheardes, and feede in the ſame paſture. Here then bee two things chiefly to be conſidered, which alſo muſt not be parted aſunder, the ſteppes of the ſheep, and the tents of the ſhepheardes: for there is a great controuerſie betweene vs and the Romiſh Church. They call vs Schiſmatikes, and we ſtand to maintaine that they be the Synagogue of Antichriſt,

tichriſt, the great whore of Babel, the mother of whoredomes and abominations of the earth, an idolatrous ſtrumpet. To the triall we come, they crie out for the ſteps of the ancient flockes, and the tents of the ancient ſhepheards that fed them and ſo doe we. Herein we doe conſent: but yet when we come to the point, we differ as farre as light and darkenes. For whereas we looke vnto the ſteps of Abraham, Izhak and Iaacob, and other holy men, whome the Scripture commendeth, wee looke vnto the faith, the doctrine and the religion of Moſes and the Prophetes, yea of the Apoſtles and Martyrs of Chriſt Ieſus, wee looke how they worſhipped, and how they liued, as the ſacred hiſtories of the Bible doe ſet foorth vnto vs: for if the word of God did not teſtifie of them, how ſhould we know their ſteps to bee the ſteppes of Chriſts flock? Alſo we looke who were the ſhepheardes vnder Chriſt in auncient time, euen the Prophetes and the Apoſtles, wee looke vnto their tents, and by them we ſeeke for paſture. We looke onely vnto the written worde which is deliuered vnto vs from God by them: for their writinges are as the ſhepheardes tents erected, and there onely is the wholeſome foode: there be the greene paſtures, there we ioyne our ſelues vnto the true ſheepe of Chriſt: this is our courſe, as Chriſt here willeth. The Papiſt wil none of this: but they will let paſſe the ſteps of Abraham, Izhak and Iaakob, of the Patriarks and Prophets

phets of the Apoſtles,& other holy men of whom the word of God beareth witneſſe: they will not allow that the writings of the Prophets and Apoſtles ſhall be the tents of theſe ſhepheards, of whome Chriſt ſpeaketh: they hold not that to be the only holeſome paſture, with which they feed Gods people. And they will haue men looke to the ſteps of certaine Popes, Cardinals, Monkes, Friers, and a deale of ſuch vermine, which for the ſpace of ſome fiue or ſixe hundreth yeares hath crawled vpon the earth. They ſend vs to the decrees of Popes and popiſh Prelates, and to their owne conſtitutions, there wil they haue the tents of the ſhepheardes to be, and the wholeſome paſtures. What a blindnes is it in all thoſe which cannot ſee that theſe bee very theeues and murtherers? For when Chriſt willeth vs to goe forth by the ſteppes of the ſheepe, and to feede by the tentes of the ſhepheardes: what ſheepe but thoſe whome hee hath giuen teſtimonie vnto by his word, that they were his faithfull worſhippers? Where ſhall wee ſeeke the Church but in the holy ſcriptures of the Apoſtles and prophets? When he ſpeaketh of the tents of the ſhepheards which fed and guided thoſe ancient flockes, whom ſhall we take then to be but onely thoſe whom he hath declared to bee his ſeruantes? euen the holie Apoſtles and Prophets? Then marke theſe popiſh ſeducers. They teach many ſtrange doctrines contrary to the doctrine of the Apoſtles and

Prophets, euen doctrines of Diuels. They worſhip Idols, and haue a thouſand ſuperſtitions: and when they ſhould proue them, that men may come to ioyne with the auncient people of God, and to feed by the tents of thoſe faithfull ſhepheards: they ſtand by the way ſide, and tel men that they will proue their doctrine and worſhip, by auncient ſhepheards and ſteppes of the ſheepe, and lead them vnto by-lanes vnto their owne Companies and murther them. For they haue nothing to proue their doctrine and worſhippe but their owne authority. Such a Pope, ſo many Cardinals, and Biſhops did decree this and that, they cannot erre, therefore we muſt beliue it. Here is all their proofe. But let vs leaue theſe wicked companions, and hearken againe what Chriſt ſayeth now further vnto his beloued Spouſe.

We haue ſeene how vehement her deſire is in ſeeking after him, and now he ſheweth how much the ſame pleaſeth him: for the commendation which he giueth vnto her, is drawn from thence. But ſee now vnder what compariſon hee prayſeth her. *I haue likened thee my loue*, (ſayth he) *vnto the troupe of horſes, which is in the Chariottes of* Pharaoh. *Thy cheekes are comely with rowes of ſtones, and thy necke with chaines.* A troupe of horſes, being the horſes alſo of a mightie king, aud furniſhed for the warres, decked with rowes of precious ſtones vpon their cheeks,

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as the manner of the Egyptians and other countries was, and chaines of gold about their necks, was a very goodly ſight, now vnto theſe he compareth his Spouſe, with her ſpirituall decking and ornaments, as it were rowes of goodly precious ſtones and chaines. But further you muſt note that the troupe of horſes in the chariots of Pharaoh were ſtrong, cheerefull, prompt and ready to the warre: and herein the Church is compared vnto them. It may be ſaid, is this holy virgin as a troupe of horſes to the warre? or is ſhe for warre? Yea, ſhe is called the Church militant, that is the Church warring. The enemies againſt whome ſhe warreth are mightie. They be principalities and powers, they be the rulers of the darkenes of this world. Her warre is againſt al the Diuels of hell: ſhe ſeeketh vnto Chriſt, and hee hath armed her with ſpirituall armour to vanquiſh them all. Vnto this battaile ſhe is prepared, ſhe is adorned, ſhe is prompt and readie, ſhee is full of fortitude and valour; the troup of horſes in the chariots of king Pharaoh, are not comparable vnto her. They bee ſtrong and ſwift, and ready to the battaile, but they be but fleſh. They be decked and ſet forth with rowes of precious ſtones vpon their cheekes, and with gold chaines about their neckes, theſe be things corruptible. Her ſtrength is ſpirituall, and againſt ſpirituall enemies: her ornaments which are likened vnto rowes of precions ſtones be alſo ſpirituall. And

ſhee is commended for her fortitude which hee hath armed her withal, euen that armour of God as S. Paul calleth it, Epheſ. 6. We ſee then that all that long after the Lord Ieſus, looſe not their labour in ſeeking vnto him: for he decketh them with heauenly ornaments, maketh them valiant and ſtrong in his owne power to fight, and to preuaile againſt the mightieſt enemies, euen the Diuels of hell. Let this ſtirre vs vp to ſeeke after him continually. He is our ſtrength and fortitude, he is our refuge and defence, through him, as S. Paul ſayeth, we are more then conquerors. And vſing the graces and gifts wel which hee beſtoweth vpon vs, wee ſhall receiue more: for marke what he promiſeth in the words that follow. *We will make thee borders of gold with ſtudes of ſiluer.* You ſee that theſe wordes are a promiſe and indeed as it is manifeſt, a promiſe of further rich ornamentes. She is richly decked alreadie, but her decking ſhall bee yet more. Shee ſhall haue the moſt excellent ornaments of golde and ſiluer, which wrought together do ſet forth each other. Indeede by theſe, the heauenly graces of the holy Ghoſt are ſignified, But who are they which ſhall make and put vpon her theſe goodlie iewels? for he ſaieth not, I will make thee, but *wee will make thee borders of golde with ſtudes of ſiluer.* Who are they whome the bridegrome here ioyneth with himſelfe in this worke? Are they his friendes, the holy Apoſtles and prophets? Indeed they

they as inſtruments haue decked and beautified the Church, with the rich and coſtlie ornaments which were deliuered vnto them for to put vpon her, and therefore it may after a ſorte be ſpoken of them. But more fullie it is to be vnderſtood of the three perſons in the glorious Trinity, the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Ghoſt: for all theſe doo decke and beautifie the Church. The Father hath giuen his Sonne to be the Sauiour of the world, & with him, or rather in him, al good things. The Sonne hath wrought al righteouſnes and finiſhed all things which concerne our redemption. And the holie Ghoſt maketh vs partakers of the ſame. Thus you ſee what a promiſe is made vnto the Church: ſhe hath goodly rich iewels beſtowed vpon her: and more coſtly ſhe ſhall haue, euen vntill ſhe come to the full and perfect beauty, which ſhe ſhall haue in the heauens. Let vs then take comfort in this promiſe, and ſet our hearts conſtantly and zealouſly to ſeeke the Lord, ſeeing it is a thing ſo pleaſing in his ſight, haſt thou receyued ſpirituall decking in thy ſoule? Seeke Chriſt, and thou ſhalt haue more, for here is a promiſe.

Now the Church ſpeaketh again, ſetting forth by three compariſons the excellent ſweetnes of Chriſt Ieſus, her moſt louing Spouſe, namely of *Spikenarde*, *Camphire* and *Myrrhe*. But there is ſome hardnes in the firſt ſentence of her ſpeech, which is thus tranſlated. *While the King was at his*

his repaſte, my ſpikenarde gaue the ſmell thereof. That which is tranſlated *his repaſt*, may be taken *his ſitting*, for the manner was in banquettes to ſit round, & ſo the word is vſed more generally. The ſenſe may be taken two waies: for if we take it after our tranſlation, then ſhe ſpeaketh of the King with her in banquet here vppon earth: Chriſt is ſaid to feaſt and banquet with the godly while they liue here. For thus he ſayeth: *Behold I ſtand at the dore and knocke, if any heare my voice and open, I will come in and ſuppe with him, and hee with mee.* Reuel. 3. verſ. 20. If we take it thus, while the King is in his ſitting, that is while he yet ſitteth in the heauens, then is there a ſecret compariſon to the ſetting forth of his wonderfull and vnſpeakeable ſweetnes. As if ſhee ſhould ſay, euen now while the King my welbeloued is ſitting in the heauens, compaſſed about with his holy Angels, and I here vpon the earth below, there is a wonderfull diſtance betweene vs, and yet the ſweet ſauour of him commeth vnto me, yea I do ſmell his ſweetneſſe, euen as it were the precious ſpikenard, Mirrhe and Camphyre. How great is his ſweetnes that commeth vnto me through this diſtance? How ſweete and delightſome ſhall he bee vnto me, when I ſhall dwell with him in the heauens? But it flatlie gaine-ſaieth this ſenſe which followeth, if wee take the words, as they be in our engliſh tranſlation, namely thus, my ſpikenard gaue the ſmel

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thereof. For then the Church commendeth her own ſweetnes, by ſaying, *my ſpikenarde gaue the ſmell thereof*. Doubtles ſhe prayſeth here the ſweetnes of Chriſt, and therefore ſeeing the words do indifferently beare it, becauſe the letter which is the affixe ſometime formeth the adiectiue, I take it to be the righter way to tranſlate it thus: *That which is of ſpikenarde gaue the ſmell thereof.* For as I ſaide by *Spikenarde*, *Myrrhe*, and *Camphire*, ſhe ſetteth foorth how ſweete Chriſt is vnto her. In the next verſe ſhe likeneth him vnto a *bundle of Myrrhe*, and ſaieth, *that he ſhall remaine betweene her breaſtes*. In our ſpeech a bundle is of ſome waight: but the word which is here vſed, ſignifieth not onely ſuch a bundle, but alſo any little bunch of flowers or ſweetes that are bound together. She compareth him therefore vnto a bunch of Myrrhe, or Noſegay (as we cal it) ſuch as they vſe to make of the ſweeteſt flowers, which the maidens did ſet in their boſomes between their breaſts, and ſo they haue the ſweet ſauour alwaies in their noſe. So this holy virgin, the ſpouſe of Chriſt, feeling her welbeloued to be ſo ſweet vnto her, ſaith, that he is as a bunch of ſweet Myrrhe, and that ſhee will ſet him in her boſome, euen between her breaſts, and there he ſhall remaine, that ſhe may alwaies ſmell his ſweetnes. In the third place ſhee ſaith, *he is to her as a cluſter of Camphire or of Cyprus, a very ſweet thing*: and euen as the ſweeteſt of

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that kind, which grew in the vines of Engedie. Is Christ Iesus as the Bride here saith of him? Is he so replenished with sweetnes, that euen from the high heauens he perfumeth the whole world with most excellent sweet smell? How is it then that the Spouse saith, it is vnto her? Doo none smell this sweetnesse but shee? Doubties the Church onely hath the right sense how sweete the Lord is. She, euen all the elect, the redeemed and sanctified in Christ, doo feele the free remission of sinnes, and reconciliation to God, from whence ariseth a sweete peace and spirituall ioy. Through faith she apprehendeth him who is her sanctifier, he is fixed in her hart, euen in her brest, and so hee maketh her continually to feele his sweete sauour. The children of this world doo smell the sweet sauour of many earthly thinges, and doo very much delight therein: but the sweetnes of Christ they doo not smell. This is no maruaile: for let the sunne shine neuer so bright, yet he that is blind perceyueth it not. And let him that is without the sense of smelling come among sweet sauours, yet hee feeleth nothing. The Lord Iesus is preached, and as it were the box of precious oyntment powred foorth into the world, so that the whole ayre is as it were perfumed with his sweet sauour: but many are so stuffed with euill sauours, euen with the stinking sauours of carnall lustes, which yet seeme most delightsome vnto them, as that they cannot

not ſmell any ſpirituall ſweetnes. When the faithfull are euen rauiſhed in minde with the ſauour of him that commeth vnto them, thoſe other are nothing moued. They ſauour the things which are of the fleſh, and not the thinges which are of God. Here is a place then, by which euery one of vs may trie himſelfe, whether we be in the right way or not. You ſee plainely, what the mother of all Gods children ſaith, how ſweet Chriſt is vnto her, and how her heart is euen ſet vppon him, ſhe fixeth him in her breaſt, that ſhee may continually be refreſhed with his ſweetnes: this is the ſtate of euerie true Chriſtian ſoule. Then if thy heart be ſet vppon the cares and pleaſures of this world, if thou bee earthly minded, bewaile thine eſtate, for what ſhall it auaile thee to boaſt of Chriſtianitie, when thou ſhalt be found to be but a counterfeit Chriſtian? But if thou findeſt that being ſtinking and loathſome in thy ſelfe, and that the Lord Ieſus doth perfume thee with his ſweetnes, ſo that thy heart for loue of him deſpiſeth vncleane luſts and carnall pleaſures, aſpiring vnto the heauens where thy treaſure and thy ioy is, then art thou moſt happie, it is with thee as the holy ſpouſe here ſpeaketh. And knowe this, that if thou wilt fixe Chriſt, euen as it were a bunch of ſweet Myrrhe in thy breaſt, thou haſt none other way to doo it, but *by meditation in the holy worde of God day and night*. Pſalme 1. For why is it that Dauid ſaith of the holy word of God,

that *it is more to bee desired then golde, yea then much fine golde, sweeter then the honey or the honey combe*. Psal. 19. But that through the word he felt all the sweetnes from Christ, deriued vnto him. The words in themselues can be but words, and not so rich, nor so sweet: but as they be the conduit pipes, or as it were, certain vessels or instruments, by which the heauenly riches are conueyed into our hearts, they be more to be desired then gold, and sweeter then honey. We apprehend Christ Iesus, and are ingrafted into him through a true and liuely faith. *That faith* (as the holy Apostle teacheth) *commeth by hearing, and hearing by the worde of God*. Rom. 10. It is not then possible for these men to feele any sweet smell of Christ Iesus our blessed Lord, which feel no sweetnes in the liuely oracles of God. They may haue certain fantasies and imaginations: but as for any power of Christ, for mortification of sin, or for quickening vnto vertues, there is none at all. They be not perfumed, Christ is not vnto them as a cluster of Camphire, or as a bunch of Mirrhe in their bosome, neither doth his sweetnes come vnto thē, as Spikenard. Let vs beloued, be carefull to differ from such, by feeling that which the bride sayeth here.

In the next words the Bridegrome speaketh again, commending and prayſing, and that very highly, the beautie of his Bride. *behold thou art faire, my loue*, (sayeth he) *beholde thou art faire, thine*

thine eyes are as the doues. It is the whole deſire of the Church to bee welfauoured, comely and beautifull in the eyes of Chriſt. If he accept of her, it is al in all, what can ſhe deſire more? A ſingular ioy it muſt needes be then vnto her, to vnderſtand for certaintie that ſhe is beautifull indeed in his ſight. And therefore the Lord to cheere her, doth pronounce in manner, as you haue heard, that ſhe is faire. And now for the manner of his ſpeech, he ſayeth, *beholde thou art faire.* The Scripture vſeth this word *behold*, when it will ſtirre vppe the mindes of men to conſider ſome rare, ſome excellent or wonderfull matter. As, *Beholde a virgin ſhall be with childe, &c. Beholde the day of the Lorde ſhall come*, &c. So then by this manner of ſpeech Chriſt here declareth that the Church his ſpouſe is exceeding beautifull in his ſight. Then further, to amplifie the matter, ſee how he doubleth his ſpeech ſaying, *Behold thou art faire my loue, beholde thou art faire.* This is to ſhew that her beautie indeed doth excell: for it doth expreſſe a vehemencie of mind, when the ſpeech is ſo doubled. If we ſpeake of a man which we take to be ſtarke nought, we doe not, if we vtter our minde to any, ſatisfie our ſelues by ſaying, he is naught: but wee will ſay, he is naught, he is naught. And ſo by doubling the ſpeech, we would haue knowne that we take him to be exceeding naught, euen ſuch as we can hardly expreſſe with words. In like manner when

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we will expreſſe the rare excellencie of any thing, we vſe to ſay, it is excellent, it is excellent. Euen ſo our Lord Ieſus Chriſt ſaith here to his Church, *Beholde thou art faire my loue, beholde thou art faire*: declaring thereby that ſhee is not onely faire, but wonderfull faire and glorious in his ſight. Let the world iudge of her how they will, eſteeming her as baſe & deformed, (for the world cannot behold the ſpirituall beautie and heauenly ornaments) yet ſhe is precious and goodly before the Lord. Wee may triumph in this, euen ſo many as vnfainedly loue the Lord Ieſus: that we are ſo comely and pleaſing in his eyes. But it may be ſaid, is there not a lumpe of ſinne? Are there not many foule ſpots and deformities in the moſt faithfull ſoules while they liue here? Is that which is polluted and defiled with ſinne, beautifull and comely in the eyes of the Lord Ieſus? Can any thing be ſo faire vnto him which is full of blemiſhes? To this I anſwere, as before I anſwered, that the Lord Ieſus beholdeth the vertues and comely graces wherewith his beloued Spouſe is decked: he doth not regard her ſpots and deformities, *becauſe hee will waſh them all away, and make her a glorious Church to himſelfe, not hauing ſpot or wrinckle*. Epheſ. 5. What may more encourage vs thē this to come vnto Chriſt? The Diuell will tell thee thus: what doeſt thou ſeeking after Chriſt? he is high, beautifull and glorious, he is moſt holy and pure. Thou doeſt but

but loſe thy labour, he wil not regard thee which art ſinful, ſpotted, and deformed. Wouldeſt thou be ioyned vnto him? Ceaſe from calling vppon him, vnles thou mighteſt be better welcome vnto him. To repell all ſuch temptations of the enemy, remember what the Lord ſaieth here vnto his Church, *Behold thou art faire my loue, beholde thou art faire.* For looke what he ſpeaketh to the whole Church, he ſpeaketh vnto euery faithfull ſoule. Is there faith, is there repentance, is there true loue, zeale, humility & meeknes? Although there be remnants of corruption, and a mixture of diuers infirmities, yet this is not taken away, *Behold thou art faire my loue, behold thou art faire.* Find out then thoſe ornaments in thy ſelfe, and though they be not perfect or ful, yet be ſure they be in truth, and come boldly vnto him, ſo louing a Sauiour, and reioyce in his loue.

That clauſe which followeth, doth yet further extoll her beautie, when he ſaith, *thine eyes are like the doues.* The chiefe beauty is in the face: for let there be neuer ſo good ſhape and proportion, if there be not a welfauoured face, all is loſt. Againe, in the face the eye is very much eyther for beauty or deformity. Now the doue hath a goodly eye, and therefore in great commendation of his Spouſe, Chriſt ſaith, *that her eyes are like doues eyes.* Furthermore, the eye of the doue is ſimple and chaſt: and therefore in this compariſon Chriſt doth beſides the beauty ſet foorth

alſo the chaſt ſimplicity of his ſpouſe. The chaſtitie of virgins is much to be commended, and a thing requiſite for al Chriſtians to poſſeſſe their veſſell in holines. This I ſpeake of the bodilie chaſtitie. But there is alſo a ſpirituall chaſtity, in which the Church is ſaid to be a chaſt and pure virgin vnto Chriſt: as there is a ſpiritual whoredome often complayned of, and condemned in the Scriptures. Then as in marriage the Bridegrome doth much delight in the chaſtitie and ſimplicitie of his Bride: ſo the faithfull ſoule being married vnto Chriſt, there is chaſtitie required. She may not follow after others, or commit whoredome with them: but ſhe muſt keepe her loue, her faith, and her affection whole and entire towardes him alone. They that embrace the doctrines and religions of men, worſhipping ſtockes and ſtones, yea Diuels, haue not doues eyes, they be not chaſt, but doo commit abominable whoredome, as the word of God dooth charge them. *Such as imbrace this worlde bee called aaulterers and aduldereſſes*, Iam. 4. verſ. 4. then their eyes be not as the eyes of the doue. They make riches their God: for they haue ſet their heart vppon them. And therefore S. Paul ſayeth, that *couetouſnes is idolatrie*, Col. 3. verſ. 5. He then that will be beautifull in the ſight of the Lorde, muſt haue doues eyes: hee muſt with the ſingle eye of faith worſhip him in ſpirit and truth, euen as he preſcribeth in his holy word: he muſt loue him

him and ſtay vppon him, and not vppon riches. What then are the eyes of the Church? That indeed may be demaunded *The eye* (as our Sauiour teacheth. Matth. 6.) *is the light of the bodie*. And without the eye there is nothing but darkenes in the bodie. The eye then of the ſoule is the light of the ſoule, and that is a true & liuely faith. Where faith is not, there is nothing but darknes, and by faith we behold God. But *without faith*, (as it is written, Heb. 11. *it is vnpoſſible to pleaſe God*. The delight then which our Lord God taketh in his ſeruants, is in the beautie of this eye of faith. Let vs then labour dayly for increaſe of the holy faith, that we may be more and more beautifull: for the beautie thereof ſhall neuer decay. Thus we ſee how the Bridegrome hath prayſed his Bride, and now ſhe rendreth the like to him. *Beholde thou art fayre my welbeloued, and pleaſant, alſo our bed is greene*. It is very true that the Bride is faire he telleth ſo which cannot lie: but ſhe reſteth not in her owne beauty, which neither ſhe hath of her ſelfe, neyther yet is it the greateſt. For firſt of all this is cleare, that ſhe hath all her beauty and ornaments from him, it is hee that *waſheth her, and maketh her glorious*. Epheſ. 5. Again, though the beautie and glory of the heauenly new Ieruſalem be exceeding great, as it is ſet forth, Reuel. 21. yet the glory of the Bridegrom exceedeth it farre: for he is the fountaine of all glory and beauty. And therefore ſhe returneth

this praiſe vpon him, that he indeed is faire and comely. Who can ſet forth the glory of Chriſt? who can deſcribe his beauty and comelines? There is in him or as S. Paul ſayeth, *there dwelleth in him all fulnes of the Godhead bodily*. Coloſ. 2. verſ. 9. All the faithfull, euen the ſanctified, doo glory in their beauty: but yet ſo, *as they knowe that they haue all from him, and ſo indeede as they glorie onely in him*. 1. Cor. 1. verſ. 31. *Behold thou art faire my welbeloued and comely*. Vnto this fountain then, who is made vnto vs of God, wiſedom, righteouſnes, ſanctification, and redemption, we are to haue recourſe. This moſt glorious beauty of the Lord, is not ſeene, nor felt of any but the faithfull. The world hath no benefite thereby, and therfore the world hath no ioy nor delight to praiſe him. Were it not for the moſt excellent beautie of Chriſt, the Church had been in euill caſe. Then ſhe addeth, *alſo our bed is greene*. She is a virgin, and yet ſhee is the mother of all Gods children: for *Ieruſalem from aboue*, (ſayth Paul) *is free, which is the mother of vs all*. Galath. 4. verſ. 26. So many as haue God their Father, haue the Church their mother. Whē ſhe ſaieth then, *our bed is greene*, ſhe ſpeaketh of procreation in that heauenly and ſpiritual birth. The greenneſſe doth ſignifie floriſhing and freſh ſpringing of thoſe goodly plants which are born of God. I need not ſtand here to handle this doctrine of regeneration, how the elect are begot-

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ten of God in the new birth, by the immortall ſeede, euen by the word of truth: and that this birth is in Chriſt: for we often deale in thoſe points. Therefore a word or two of that which remaineth.

The beames of our houſe are Cedars, *the rafters are of Firrhe.* Whether this be the ſpeech of the Bride alone, as it may ſeeme, or whether it be vttered by them both, it is not much materiall to be ſtood vpon. Here is commended their houſe which they dwell in: and the commendation is from the matter which it is built of, euen Cedars and Firrhe. Theſe kinds of wood are durable, & commodious otherwiſe. That worde which is tranſlated rafters, is rather to be taken for galleries, or goodly walks, which were wont to be vpon the tops of kings pallaces. But what is this palace? It is to be taken for the heauens, in which they ſhall for euer dwell together? I ſuppoſe rather that it is meant of an houſe, while ſhe is yet in the world. What houſe then? Surely the church her ſelfe, is the temple of the liuing God. Euery faithfull ſoule is the habitation of Chriſt. And therefore the holy Prophet in the Pſalme, calleth vpon men to open the dores of their heart to receiue in Chriſt: *Lift vp your heades yee gates, and be yee lift vppe ye euerlaſting dores, and the King of glory ſhall come in.* Pſal. 24. And thus we haue had, as I may ſay, one ſong betweene theſe louers. Let vs pray.

THE THIRD SERMON.

CHAP. II.

1 *I am the roſe of the fielde, and the lillie of the vallies.*

2 *Like a lillie among the thornes, ſo is my loue among the daughters.*

3 *Like as the apple tree among the trees of the forreſt, ſo is my welbeloued among the ſonnes: vnder his ſhadow I had delight, and ſate down, and his fruit was ſweet vnto my mouth.*

4 *He brought mee into the houſe of wine, and loue was his banner ouer me.*

5 *Stay me with flagons, and comfort me with apples, for I am ſicke of loue.*

6 *His left hand is vnder my head, & his right hand doth imbrace me.*

7 *I charge you, O daughters of Ieruſalem, by the roes and by the hyndes of the field, that yee ſtirre not vp nor wake my loue, vntill ſhe pleaſe.*

IF this be called the Song of Songs, not onelie for the excellencie, but alſo as ſome ſuppoſe it may

may, becauſe it doth containe in it diuers Songs: then haue wee finiſhed one Song in the former chapter, and here we haue another in this chapter. The Bride did begin the former, and now let vs ſee which of them doth begin this Song. The Pronoun (*ani*) which ſignifieth in our tongue, *I*, is common both to man and woman, as I man, or I woman, ſo that it cannot be decided by the forme of ſpeech whether of them ſaieth, *I am the roſe of Sharon, and the lillie of the vallies*. Moreouer the Lord Ieſus and his Church are both of them ſweet, fayre, comely, and beautifull, yea ſo ſweet, and ſo exceeding beautifull, that all the ſweeteſt roſes and whiteſt lillies in the worlde are not comparable vnto them. If he be called the roſe and the lillie, it is moſt true he is ſo. And if the Church be likned vnto them, it is a fit comparison. Can it not then (may ſome man ſay) be gathered which of them ſpeaketh this? Yes verily, it is out of doubt, that Chriſt ſpeaketh this of himſelfe, ſaying, *I am the roſe of Sharon, and the lillie of the vallies*. He doth in this ſet foorth his own prayſe. The Church doth not ſpeake it: for then ſhe ſhould prayſe her ſelfe, which is not meete. If you will ſay, may not the Church prayſe her ſelfe? how then doth Chriſt prayſe himſelfe? This is eaſily aunſwered: Chriſt Ieſus is the fountaine of all goodnes, he is worthy all prayſe, and may rightly prayſe himſelfe, as hee doth in the Goſpell ſay, *that hee is the breade of*

life, and he is the light of the world. The Church hath all her holines and beautie from Christ, she may not praise her selfe. *No man is to praise himselfe*, Prou. 17. vers. 2. If any man shall reply that the Church did in the former Chapter praise her selfe, saying, *that shee is blacke, but yet comely, &c.* I answer, that she was forced thereunto, least by those that take occasion to depraue her, the weak might stumble, and be made to despise her. Saint Paul (as you know) was constrained to praise himself, least his doctrine should bee defaced, 1. Cor. 11. The false Apostles which sought all occasions to discredite him, did force him thereunto: and he sayeth, *that hee dealt therein after the manner of fooles.* Then we may see, that as the Bride began the former Song, setting foorth the excellencie of her Bridegrome, and her desire to be with him, as the author and very fountaine of all her ioy and happines: so here the bridegrome beginneth, first praysing himselfe, and then hee commendeth his dearely beloued Spouse. Here be a couple praysed, euen a Bridegrome and his bride, both of them excellent, fayre, sweet, goodly and pure. Yea, they resemble each the other: for he is as the lillie, and she is so likewise. But he is praysed first, because he is the very fountain, all fulnes of sweet thinges is in him: and from him she receyueth all her goodnes, beautie and puritie. Without him, what are all the children of Adam? Are not all defiled? Are not all corrupt

rupt and abominable? Yea, doo not all lie vnder ſinne, euen ouerwhelmed in the ſtinking mudde of vncleannes? Then that the Church is a lillie, ſhe hath it from him, who ſaith, *I am the lillie, of the valliet*. And marke how the Lord is ſet forth vnto vs by two goodly flowers, *the roſe* and *the lillie*. They be ſweet, and they be beautiful: *Salomon in all his royaltie not like them*. Matth. 6. So our Lord is holy, he is pure, he is innocent, he is ful of al beautie and glorie. And it is to be noted, that he compareth himſelf to the goodlieſt roſe and the ſweeteſt, and to the faireſt Lillie: for he ſaieth, *I am the roſe of Sharon*, which was a goodly fruitfull place mentioned in diuers places of the Scripture, in which, as it appeareth by this place, the roſe did excell: and the lillie of the vallies is the fayreſt. Beholde here what a Sauiour we haue to come vnto: how comfortable and delightſome is he, how ſoft and gentle? How is he to be coueted, to bee loued and imbraced? And why doth he publiſh this praiſe of himſelfe, but to draw vs vnto him? Why are wee ſo dull hearted, and ſo negligent in ſeeking to be ioyned vnto him? What is there vnder the Sunne that ſhould ſtay vs from ſuch a Sauiour? Lord make vs to behold thy glorious beautie, and to ſmel this ſweete fauour, that wee may come vnto thee.

Let vs come to the next verſe, *Like a lillie among the thornes, ſo is my loue among the daughters*

text. This praiſe the Lord giueth of his Church: but as I ſaid before, that ſhe is as the faire, ſweete and ſoft lillie, ſhe hath it from him. *Of his fulnes we all receiue, euen grace for grace*, Iohn 1. And therefore when he had ſaid, I am the lillie of the valleis, he addeth by and by, that his loue is as the lillie. She is made righteous in him, ſhee is cloathed with his innocencie and obedience: ſhe is made faire and beautifull in him. But we muſt obſerue how he ſetteth her forth, here by a compariſon, which conſiſteth of foure *termini*, as they call them, the *lillie, the thornes, his loue and the daughters*. The ſenſe may be taken two wayes: as firſt, ſome haue taken it that he ſetteth foorth the ſtate and condition of the Church, in which ſhe is here in the world touching afflictions. As to ſay, like the ſoft lillie, which groweth among the thornes, is pricked of them: ſo my ſpouſe, my loue is pricked, and afflicted of the daughters among whome ſhee dwelleth. This is a true doctrine, for there be ſondrie aſſemblies of diuers religions in the world, & euery one doth challenge to be the true Church, and ſo all take vpon them to be the daughters of the moſt high, and ſo the title is giuen vnto them, though they be not ſo in deed. All theſe doo hate and perſecute the true Church, and are euen like thornes in her ſide. Thus I ſay, ſome haue expounded this place, and it is true, but not the ſenſe of this place. It is not the meaning of Chriſt here to ſhew the affliction

of

of his ſpouſe, or the hard condition that ſhe is in, but to magnifie her excellent beautie. For the compariſon is made thus. The churches of Idolaters make a goodly externall ſhew, and there ſeemeth to be a great pompe and glorie, ſo that to themſelues they ſeeme to bee beautifull and goodly: but my loue excelleth them, as farre as the ſweet white lillie excelleth the thornes. So that this worde *among* is taken in compariſon. Set a lillie in compariſon among briars, and thornes, and ſee how it doth excell them: ſo doth the true Church excell all aſſemblies of worſhippers in the world. She is baſe and deſpiſed in the eyes of the world, as hauing no ornaments; but in the eyes of the Lorde is ſhee full of ſpirituall beautie, and decked with heauenlie iewels. Contrariwiſe, thoſe counterfeyte daughters be verie gorgeous and trimme to the outward eye, they be very pompous and ſhining in the fleſh: but in the eyes of the Lord they be but as thornes. Behold here the difference. Precious in the eyes of the Lord is his holy Church: but all other aſſemblies are but as thornes, meete for the fire. The bride hearing this commendation giuen of her by her bridegrom, breaketh forth into his praiſe, which ſhee doth alſo ſet foorth by a compariſon, ſaying, *As the apple tree among the trees of the forreſt, ſo is my welbeloued among the ſonnes.* As he ſet foorth her praiſe, that ſhe excelleth all the daughters, as far as the lillie excelleth the thorns:

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ſo ſhe commendeth him, that he in dignitie ſurmounteth all the ſonnes, as farre as the apple tree goeth beyond the common trees of the forreſt. It may be demaunded, who are thoſe ſonnes with whom Chriſt is compared? Take them whome you will among all creatures in heauen & earth, he farre excelleth them all. *The Angels are great and glorious, but he is greater*, Heb. 1. *He is farre aboue all principalitie and power, and might, and domination, and euery name that is named, not onely in this worlde, but in that which is to come*. Epheſ. 1. Right well therefore doth the Church compare him to excell all other, as farre as the apple tree excelleth the common trees of the forreſt. And marke now how ſhe proſecuteth this allegorie, ſhewing what worthy benefites ſhe receiueth from this goodly apple tree. Shee includeth them all vnder two, his ſhadow, and his fruite. *Vnder his ſhadowe* (ſaith ſhee) *I had delight, and ſate downe, and his fruite was ſweete vnto my mouth*. The ſhadow of a tree (as al men know) is comfortable, and doth refreſh thoſe that are parched with the boiling heat of the Sun. The Church is vnder hote perſecutions: there be alſo firy temptations of the Diuell, and burning heat of guiltines: for ſinne in the conſciences of al the elect, vntill they be refreſhed by Chriſt. Wherefore he ſaith, *Come vnto me all yee that trauel and be heauie laden, and I will refreſh you*, Matt. 11. Vnder his ſhadow ſhe taketh delight: in him

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ſhe findeth reſt and peace, and therefore ſhe ſitteth downe and remaineth vnder his ſhadow. A matter worthy to be noted, how the faithfull hauing founde the Lord Ieſus, and being comforted and refreſhed by him, do hold themſelues cloſe vnder his ſhadow, they make their abode there, and ſeeke no further. They find that in him there is a full ſufficiencie to refreſh them in perſecution, and to quench and coole all the heat of their ſinnes. Farre otherwiſe it is with Idolaters, and ſuch as worſhip falſe Gods. When they haue done al that they can; they are not ſatisfied, they finde no eaſe, nor no way to take away the ſting of conſcience. *They multiplie their ſorrowes*, as the Prophet ſayth, Pſal. 16. They doo puniſh and afflict themſelues many waies, ſeeking all meanes to make ſome ſatisfaction for their ſins, to coole the burning heat of their guiltie conſcience: but when they haue wearied themſelues, they can find no eaſe nor no reſt, for that is onely to bee found vnder the ſhadow of this apple tree, where the holy Spouſe taketh her delight and is ſet downe. Shall wee not then ſit downe onely vnder the ſhadow of Chriſt? And then ſhe ſaith, *that his fruite is ſweete vnto her mouth*. She doth not from this fruitfull tree receiue only the comfortable refreſhing ſhadow, but alſo eateth of the apples which he beareth: and the ſame (as ſhe affirmeth) are ſweet and pleaſant to her taſt. What theſe apples are, I need not ſtand to ſhew:

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the faithful ſoule feedeth vpon Chriſt, and is nouriſhed with all heauenly foode, euen the fruites which he beareth. And what is wanting in him? He *is made vnto vs of God* (as S. Paul ſaith) *wiſedome, righteouſnes, ſanctification and redemption*. 1. Cor. 1. The holy Church is by him alone fullie ſatisfied with all good things, which ſhe doth here declare not onely by this Allegorie of an apple tree, but alſo by a banquet: for ſhe addeth: *The King brought me into the banqueting houſe, and loue was his banner ouer mee*. It is in our engliſh tranſlation, the king brought mee into the wine celler. The word in the Hebrew text is, the houſe of wine. To take this houſe of wine for a wine celler, is not fitte: for it is not the order, nor comely that a king ſhould leade his ſpouſe into a wine celler: nay, the houſe of wine is that which we call a banqueting houſe. The great kinges and noble Princes of this world doe vſe to entertain one an other in ſumptuous and royall banqueting houſes, in which they doe ſet before them all the daintie thinges which can bee gotten for money. This moſt high and glorious king of al kinges, bringeth his Loue, his Queen, his deare Spouſe, into his banqueting houſe, which doth excell al the banqueting houſes of earthly kings. The coſtly things which they doo banquette withal, are but traſh and droſſe, and beggarly ſcraps, in compariſon of thoſe heauenly dainties, with which he doth entertaine his

Spouſe

Spouſe. Here is therefore a moſt rich and precious banquet mentioned. Here is that which is written: *The kingdome of heauen is like to a King that married his ſonne*, Matth. 22. *Happie and bleſſed are all they, which are called to this ſupper*, Reuel. 19. verſe 9. But it may be ſaid, how commeth ſhe into this houſe of Wine? And how doth ſhee taſte of theſe heauenlie dainties? You muſt marke how ſhee ſaieth,, that the King brought her into the houſe of Wine. None can enter in thether, except the Lord Ieſus by his ſpirite doo leade them in. *No man* (ſaith he) *commeth vnto me except the Father that ſent me to draw him*, Iohn 6. Wee cannot bee partakers of the heauenly treaſures which are in chriſt, but through the operation of the holy Ghoſt, as Saint Paule teacheth at large, 1. Cor. 2. And the Church doth taſte of this banquet, ſpiritually through faith, She doth ſo feede vpon Chriſt crucified, eating his fleſh, and drinking his bloode. What good thing then doth ſhee want? Is not al fulnes in Chriſt? We neede not doubt, but that here is righteouſnes, here is life, here is peace, here is ioy, euen vnſpeakable and glorious, as the holy Apoſtle Saint Peter ſpeaketh, 1. Pet. 1. verſe 8. And it is a moſt ſpeciall matter which ſhee addeth, ſaying, *And loue was his banner ouer me*. It is the vſe and manner in the warres, that an enſigne or banner is ſpreade and diſplayed: and ſo the bands and companies of ſoldiers are aſſembled

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and gathered together each company vnto their own colours. The Church vpon earth is a church militant, and hath a great Captaine, a mightie Emperour, vnder whose conduct she doth warre and fight the good fight of faith. His banner is displayed, euen to assemble and gather together vnto him all his bands and companies. And this banner (as he saith) which is thus spreade ouer her, is loue. All the faithfull, euen all the chosen of God, are drawn vnto Christ by his loue. What loue is like vnto his, *who hath giuen himselfe to death for vs when we were his enemies?* Rom. 5. *Who hath washed vs in his blood.* Reuel. 1. And what is the true and liuely faith, which bringeth men vnto God, but euen to apprehend his fauour, and to know that he hath loued vs, & giuen his owne sonne, euen by his precious death and blood-shedding to worke our redemption? All men will confesse that this was a singular loue in Christ: but yet euery man is not drawn thereby to loue againe with the true loue, of which hee himselfe doth speake in the Gospel, saying, *If any man loue me he will keepe my word.* Iohn 14. 23. And in the same Chapter he sayeth, *Hee that hath my commandementes and keepeth them, is hee that loueth me*: but onely they which feele that the same loue of Christ reacheth vnto themselues. For the loue of Christ is the ensigne spread, by which he draweth all his chosen vnto him: and no one is drawne, but they onely ouer whom the same

ſame enſigne is diſplayed. For marke this how ſhee ſaith, *Loue was his banner ouer me.* The loue of Chriſt is preached, and ſo the banner is after a ſort diſplayed ouer all that doe heare what hee hath done for mankinde: notwithſtanding, no man is drawne, ſauing ſuch as are aſſured that he hath loued them: for loue is his banner ouer them. They haue the full aſſurance of faith, that hee ſuffered death to make ſatisfaction for their ſinnes, that in him they are iuſtified and ſanctified, and ſhalbe glorified. *His ſpirite doth witnes together with their ſpirit, that they be the ſonnes of God.* Rom. 8. Theſe doe indeed loue him againe: theſe are enflamed with a moſt vehement deſire to come vnto him, and they ioy and delight in him continually. Yea I may ſay rightly, that there are not any which doe worſhip and ſerue the Lorde with any acceptable ſeruice or worſhip, but onely thoſe ouer whom the bāner of his loue is ſpread. For vndoubtedly, that which proceedeth not of loue, is but as a duty which is forced, it commeth not in his right kinde, it is wrought for ſome ſiniſter reſpects, or wrung forth by a ſeruile feare. *Without faith* (ſaieth the holy Ghoſt, Heb. 11.) *it is vnpoſſible to pleaſe God.* What is the reaſon of that? The reaſon is manifeſt, that vntill a man by faith doe find and know that the Lord loueth him, he cannot loue God. *We loue him* (ſaith S. Iohn) *becauſe he loued vs firſt*, 1. Iohn 4. And not louing God, he cannot offer any thing vnto him

which is acceptable and pleasing in his sight. The Lord God is delighted only with that which proceedeth from a franke heart which sincerelie loueth him. And (as S. Paul saith, Galat. 4.) *fauth worketh by charity*. Beholde then, the fountaine of all holy duties in man towards his Lord God, euen loue, and the same wrought by the banner of his loue spread ouer vs, as the holy spouse here speaketh. Vntill we doe beholde this banner in deede displayed ouer vs, wee lie vtterlie as dead blockes, touching any holie action. A man may force his hands, his feete, his tongue, yea euen his minde also vnto the doing of such thinges as are required: but all is nothing, vntil the loue of Christ constraine vs. When that banner is spread ouer vs, then are we drawne, then wee run. *Simon Ioanna, louest thou mee? feede my sheepe. Louest thou me? feede my lambs*. Ioh. 1. 21. And look what Paul did, he saith, *the loue of Christ constrayneth vs*. 2. Cor. 5. 14. And we reade of the woman in the Gospel, which washed the feete of the Lord with teares, & wiped them with the haires of her head. From whence proceedeth al this? Was it not frō hence, as Christ saith, that she loued much? And why did she loue much? Hee also sheweth, when he sayeth, : *for many sinnes are forgiuen her*. Shee had felt the banner of his loue spread ouer her, in forgiuing her many sinnes, and this did draw her to loue him exceedingly. Then may wee learne from this speech of the Church, what is the chief

duty

dutie of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, namely, to ſpread this banner of his loue vnto the people: yea, euen to publiſh and lay open the riches of his loue towardes mankinde, in offering himſelf to be a ranſome for the ſins of the world, to draw men out of eternal miſery, vnto a moſt happie and bleſſed life. And then if you wil loue the Lord Ieſus indeed, ſeeke to apprehend his loue. Euery man that taketh a wife and a right courſe, muſt come vnto this with the holy Spouſe, *Loue was his banner ouer me.* For if Chriſt by faith doe leade him into the banqueting houſe, euen to make him taſte of all thoſe heauenly dainties which be in himſelf, ſo that he feele that through his croſſe his ſinnes are defaced, he is made righteous and innocent, he is deliuered from the tyrannie of the Diuell, from death and endles miſerie, and made heyre of euerlaſting glorie: then doth he make him behold the banner of his loue ſpread ouer him: and then is the heart of that man ſet on fire with a burning loue towards the Lord Ieſus Chriſt: he ſeeketh after him, as after his chiefe treaſure and hearts ſolace: hee delighteth to heare his voice: he taketh pleaſure in his commandements: hee doth al his endeuour to ſet forth his glory and prayſe, yea al fruits of loue doe follow, euen of a moſt earneſt loue. But that wil appeare more by the next words in which ſhe crieth out, *Stay me with flagons, and comfort mee with apples: for I am ſicke of loue.*

Behold here a wonderfull effect of thoſe former thinges which ſhe ſpake of. Shee compared Chriſt vnto an appletree, vnder whoſe ſhadowe ſhe tooke delight and ſate downe, and his fruite was ſweete vnto her mouth. *Hee brought her* (as ſhee ſaieth) *into the houſe of wine, and loue was his banner ouer her*. Hereupon her heart is ſo rauiſhed with loue towards him, that ſhe is loue-ſicke, and readie to ſound therewith, and crieth out to haue them to ſtay her vp with flagons, and to comfort her with apples. Here is a maruailous paſſion of loue, The ſimilitude is drawn from hence, when a virgin is betrothed, and though the vehemencie of her loue towards her ſpouſe, is ſicke, and ſoundeth. A greater or a more vehement, or paſſionate loue there cannot be. By this therfore the ſpirituall and holie loue of the Church is figured: for the faithful ſoule taſting the ſweetnes of thoſe apples, and of that heauenly wine, hath ſuch a deſire of Chriſt, as cannot with any wordes bee expreſſed. She ſaith, ſhee is ſicke of loue, and as it were ſwounding. And marke this well as a ſpeciall point, where ſhe ſeeketh helpe, and how ſhe is ſupported. The ſweetnes of thoſe apples which ſhe taſted, & of the precious wine, brought her into this paſſion, yet her appetite & deſire of them is not thereby diminiſhed, but ſhe deſireth thē ſo much the more. Shee calleth for flagons of that wine to comfort and refreſh her ſpirits, and to haue thoſe ſame apples ſtrowed vnder her that

ſhe may bee refreſhed with their ſweet ſent. The faithfull whome Chriſt leadeth into the houſe of wine, euen vnto the banquet of heauenly things, doe not receiue the ſame in full meaſure, but as it were a taſte is giuen them by ſmall drops: which S. Paule calleth *the firſt fruits of the ſpirit*. Rom. 8. verſe 23. And, *the earneſt of the ſpirit*. Epheſ. 1. Now by theſe droppes they doe perceiue what a wonderfull ſweetnes there is in thoſe heauenlie things, and hereupon they be euen as it were ſick with loue, and ready to ſwounde with the deſire of hauing more: for you ſee that ſhee crieth out for more: It is the will of God, that his redeemed ſhall not while they liue here, be filled with thoſe precious thinges which bee in Chriſt, *in whome there is all fulnes, and of whoſe fulnes we all receiue*. Iohn 1. 16. But a meaſure is diſtilled into their ſoules as it were by little creuiſes, and ſo they doe ſtill hunger and thirſt after them exceedingly. But vnto whome doth ſhee crie out for the flagons, and for thoſe ſweete apples? Shee ſeemeth not to direct her wordes vnto Chriſt: for ſhee ſpeaketh in the plurall number, and not vnto ſome one. Verily, ſhee calleth vnto thoſe into whoſe handes Chriſt hath committed theſe treaſures to deliuer vnto her. And who be they? Euen his faithfull ſeruants, the Prophets and Apoſtles, and all holy teachers. For by the miniſterie of theſe, the Lord hath deliuered vnto his Church all thoſe heauenly dainties. They haue alwaies

fed her: and therefore ſhe doth rightly direct her ſpeech vnto them, not as vnto the authors, but as vnto the miniſters of thoſe things: for ſhe knoweth that they be wholy and altogether from her welbeloued. *They bee but as ſtewardes and diſpoſers of the miſteries of God* 1. Cor. 4. 1. I neede not ſtande to make prooſe of this, which all that haue any ſparke of true knowledge do confeſſe. But let vs obſerue here ſome thinges for our inſtruction. As firſt, what is the cauſe that few are ſicke & ready to ſwound with the loue of Chriſt? Or that ſo few in compariſon of the multitude, doe cal for the flagons of the heauenlie wine, and for the ſweete apples? We ſee that almoſt all doe ſeeke after gold and ſiluer, bending their whole ſtudie and care night and day how they may get them. The cauſe is manifeſt, men by nature can tell what theſe thinges are worth, and doe feele commodities ariſing by them which are ſweete to the fleſh. They neuer taſted of thoſe rich dainties which be in Chriſt, and therefore they be not moued with any deſire of them. For who can long for thoſe thinges which hee neuer felt any ſweetnes of? Nay the madnes of the worlde goeth yet further: for they mocke and ſcorn at the bride, when ſhe thus calleth for theſe heauenly things: For if they ſee any that is earneſtly affected to call vpon the Apoſtles and Prophetes in their writinges, and to the faithfull teachers that publiſh the ſame, to haue this wholeſome wine

and

and daintie apples miniſtred vnto them, though they doe it not ſo earneſtly as they themſelues ſeeke golde: yet they deeme them to bee out of their wits, to be fooliſh and mad. Doubtles they bee more then mad which preferre earthly and tranſitorie things, euen very droſſe, before the rich treaſures which are in Chriſt. Then further, you ſhall haue manie that will confeſſe, that in deed all good things are in Chriſt, and that ſuch onely are happie as be partakers of the ſame, and a deſire they ſeeme to haue to inioy the ſame: but they diſdaine that which the holy Church dooth here, they will by no meanes ſeeke them at their hands whome the Lord hath made the diſpoſers. They deſpiſe the doctrine of the Prophetes, and Apoſtles, they care not for hearing the ſame publiſhed. They know not that the true Church, euen all the faithfull, doo call vnto the miniſters of the liuely word, *Stay me vp with flagons, and comforte mee with apples*, No, they will receiue all as it were immediately from Chriſt himſelf. Theſe are blind and bewitched by Sathan: for they do not know Gods ordinance, and how Chriſt doth feed his Church with heauenly thinges, by the handes of his miniſters. Indeede they bee but inſtruments, *Paule planteth, Apollo watereth, but God giueth the increaſe*, 1. Cor. 3. 6. It is the Lord himſelfe that ſupporteth his Church by his diuine power: and therefore you may ſee what ſhee addeth touching that matter in the next verſe, ſaying, His

left hand is vnder my head, and with his right hande hee doth imbrace mee. Shee doth ſo call (as wee haue ſeene) for the thinges at the handes of the miniſters: but ſhe feeleth and confeſſeth that all the efficacie is from the Lord himſelfe, ſhewing that he doth ſtay her vp with both hands. *His left hand* (ſaieth ſhe) *is vnder my heade, and with his right hand he doth embrace me.* Then marke how wee are to take heede of two extremities. It is Gods ordinance to deliuer all the heauenlie treſures vnto vs, by the handes of his miniſters: he worketh by them as by inſtrumentes, holding them as ſtarres in his right hand, Reuel. 1. We muſt take heede that wee diſdaine not to receiue them that way. And then wee muſt alſo beware that we depend not vpon the men, but with the Church here looke vp higher euen vnto the Lord himſelfe, who worketh all in all. For by the miniſterie of men we are to be led as it were by the hand vnto Chriſt, in him we are to ſtay, hee onely muſt vphold vs. Behold here the kindnes of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt vnto thoſe that truely do ſeeke him. Their frailtie is great, but he doth vpholde them, & comfort thē with both hands. Here is the reſt, here is the ioy, here is the comfort of euerie afflicted ſoule, to be receyued thus into the arms of Chriſt. And what ſaieth he? *Come vnto mee all yee that trauell, and bee heauie laden, and I will refreſh you.* Matth. 11. 28. Here is a ſweete Sauiour to come vnto. Theſe things are plaine and eaſie:

but

but that which followeth in the next verſe is ſomewhat hard to be expounded. The words are theſe, *I charge you O you daughters of Ieruſalem, by the Roes, and by the* Hindes *of the fielde, that you ſtirre not vppe, nor wake my loue vntill ſhe pleaſe.* In deede they are thus to bee tranſlated: *I adiure you, O daughters of Ieruſalem, or I laye an oath vpon you, or cauſe you to ſweare by the Roes or by the* Hyndes *of the field, if you ſtirre vppe or if you awake, &c.* for hee vſeth the word of making others to take an oath. Here will ariſe ſome difficultie about this manner of oath, by the roes or hindes: but the greateſt difficultie is to finde whether it bee Chriſte that giueth this ſtraight charge or the Church. By our engliſh tranſlation, you may ſay there is no doubt, but that Chriſt giueth this charge, becauſe it is, *that you wake not my loue vntill ſhee pleaſe.* For if it were the Church ſhee woulde ſay, *that you wake not my loue vntill ſhee pleaſe.* Yea, but it is not ſo eaſilie diſcuſſed by the Hebrew text: for the word *loue, ahahhah*, is feminine; and if the Church call Chriſt her loue, the conſtruction is with a verbe of the feminine gender. Some doe expounde it that the Lord Ieſus, dooth charge the falſe ſiſters of the Church, the degenerate aſſemblies of Idolaters, that they doe not moleſt nor trouble this happie peace and reſt of the Church, which ſhe hath in him: for the Diuell hath plentie of

ſuch

ſuch to worke his diſquietnes withall. Some others doe make ſome reaſons to proue that it is not Chriſt, but the Church which giueth this ſtraight charge, not vnto her falſe ſiſters, but vnto her companions, that they do not by any rude behauiour cauſe Chriſt to depart away, or to withdraw himſelfe. Indeede the Church is to warne all her weake daughters to carrie themſelues reuerently and purely in the preſence of Chriſt, that they doe not anie thing that may diſpleaſe him. The reaſons alledged are not ſo ſtrong, as to proue it of neceſſity to be the ſpeech of the Church, and therefore I will not rehearſe them. Which of them ſpeake it, the matter is of great waight, as appeareth by the charge, that is giuen by oath. But now touching this oath: are we not to ſweare onely by the Lorde God? Is it not hee alone that ſearcheth the hearts, and the raines, and can tell where there is integrity? Is not he alone the patron of the iuſt and innocent, and the taker of vengeance vppon ſuch as abuſe his name? How then is here an oathe giuen by creatures? Some doe expound the wordes with an eclipſe, thus, *Abide you abroade with the roes or with the hyndes of the fielde*. Others doo take it not as an oath, but as an obteſtation, as if theſe thinges, namely, the roes and hyndes onely are called to witnes, as you knowe that it is an vſuall thing in the Prophets, to call vppon creatures to

beare

beare witneſſe. As Moſes calleth heauen and earth to record. Verily it doth not ſeeme here to be a ſimple obteſtation: yet doth it not warrant men to take an oth by creatures, in as much as all things in this Song bee miſticall. If it be an oath giuen by Chriſt for the quiet of his Church: let vs take heede leaſt we incurre the daunger of it, by being found among her diſturbers. If it be the Church that chargeth vs to beware of light and wanton, or rude behauiour in the preſence of ſo holy and ſo glorious a king: let vs feare and tremble, let vs ſtudie continually to bee holie and pure, meete to bee admitted into the banqueting houſe, and to bee in the preſence of a King and Queene ſo glorious.

Thus much for this time.

Let vs pray.

The

THE FOVRTH SERMON.

Chap. II.

8 *It is the voice of my welbeloued, behold hee commeth leaping ouer the mountaines, and skippeth ouer the hilles.*

9 *My Welbeloued is like a* Roe, *or a young* Hynde: *beholde hee standeth behinde our wall looking through the windowes, shewing himselfe through the grates.*

10 *My welbeloued spake and said vnto me, arise my loue, my faire one and come away.*

11 *For beholde the winter is past, the raine is changed, and gone away.*

12 *The flowers appeare in the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.*

13 *The figge tree hath brought foorth her young figges: and the vines with their small grapes haue cast a sauour: arise my loue, my faire one, and come away.*

14 *My doue, that art in the holes of the rocke, in the secrets places of the stayres, shew mee thy face,*

make

make mee to heare thy voice, for thy voice is ſweet, & thy face is comely.

15 *Take vs the foxes, the little foxes, which deſtroy the vines, for our vines haue ſmall grapes.*

16 *My welbeloued is mine, and I am his, he feedeth among the lillies.*

17 *Vntill the day breake, and the ſhadowes flie away: returne my welbeloued, and bee like a Roe, or a young Harte vpon the mountaines of Bether.*

IN the former parte of this Chapter wee haue ſeene how Chriſt Ieſus calling himſelfe a roſe and a lillie, giueth vs to vnderſtande, that in him is the fountaine, the fulnes and perfection of all ſweet and goodly thinges. Alſo that from his ſweetnes and beautie, his Church is made ſo ſweete and faire, that ſhee excelleth all other daughters, as far as the pure white lillie doth the thorns. Then ſhe ſetteth forth the praiſe of her welbeloued, by a compariſon alſo: namely, that as the appletree excelleth the trees of the wood, ſo doth he excell the ſonnes. And further by the ſhadowe of this tree, and the fruite, and by being led into the houſe of wine, ſhee declareth that in him, ſhee is made partaker of all heauenlie bleſſings, and feeling his loue, ſhe is euen ſicke with loue towardes him, calling for the further partaking of thoſe graces

graces, and is imbraced, comforted and ſupported by Chriſt. Laſtly, a ſtraight charge is giuen, that this may not be interrupted. Now in the reſt of this Chapter vnder another ſimilitude, namely of the flouriſhing ſpring, ſhe ſetteth foorth, how he calleth her foorth to the viewing and partaking of thoſe heauenly things. I will firſt lay open vnto you (as I may ſay) the letter of the Allegory: for thereby wee ſhall the more eaſilie come to the ſenſe. Conſider of two louers here in the worlde betrothed the one to the other. The woman remaining in the houſe in the winter, the man often abroad in the fields, and whē the ſpring time is come, he calleth & inuiteth his ſpouſe to come forth to walke, and to take the delight and comfort of thoſe pleaſant thinges, which the ſpring doth afforde. Euen ſo the Church, the beloued ſpouſe of Chriſt, being of her ſelfe here in this world, as it were ſhut vp in the houſe vnder the barrennes of winter, is by her welbeloued called vpon to come forth as it were to walke, to viewe, and to take the ſolace and comfort of that heauenly ſpring. This is the ſumme of all that ſhee doth here report. And now let vs come to the particulars. *It is the voice* (ſaith ſhee) *of my welbeloued, beholde hee commeth leaping ouer the mountaines and ſkipping ouer the hilles. My welbeloued is like a Roe or a young* Hynde. In theſe words you ſee, that ſhe ſheweth how ſhe perceyued his comming, and the manner of his comming

ming. She perceyueth his comming by his voice, ſhe heareth his voice, ſhee knoweth his voice, *It is the voice* (ſaith ſhee) *of my welbeloued: beholde he commeth.* The Lord Ieſus doth call his choſen by his holy word, that is his voice. *And they know his voice*, as he ſayeth, Iohn 10. *My ſheepe heare my voice.* By faith they diſcerne his voice, euen the heauenly and pure doctrine: the men of this world, euen the infidels cannot heare him. There be many opinions ſay they, how can we tel which is the truth? And marke how by his voice, that is by his liuely worde ſhee perceyueth that Chriſt commeth vnto her. It is a ſpirituall and an inuiſible comming, and ſhee hath a ſpirituall eare to heare, and eyes of the ſpirite to beholde him. *Let him that hath an eare* (ſayeth the holy Ghoſt,) *heare what the ſpirit ſayeth to the Churches*, Reuel. 2. and 3. This voice of Chriſt ſoundeth in the world, but none heare it, none ioy in it but the holy Church with her children. You may reade in Prouerbs, Chap. 1. How Salomon there ſaith, *that the higheſt wiſedome* (that is Chriſt) *vttereth her voice alonde in the ſtreetes, in the open places, and aſſemblies, but is not regarded.* Onely (I ſay) the Church heareth, and is ſo ioyfull at it, that ſhe ſaieth, *beholde hee commeth*, Then touching the manner of his comming, ſhe ſetteth it forth not onely to be ſwift and ſpeedie, comparing him *to a Roe or young Hynde*, but alſo that no difficulties in the way can hinder or let him: for he leadeth

leapeth ouer mountaines and hils. A moſt worthie thing to bee noted, that nothing can keepe backe or ſeperate Chriſt from his Church: his loue is ſo great towardes her. There be euen as it were high hilles and mountaines of ſinnes in the people of God, which might ſeperate, and the diuel raiſeth vp bankes to make the waye vnpleaſant: but hee paſſeth ouer all theſe high mountaines: ſo aboundant is his kindnes and loue. Saint Paule handleth this point, Rom. 8. 38. 39. *Neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor thinges preſent, nor thinges to come, nor height, nor depth, nor anie other creature, ſhall bee able to ſeperate vs from the loue of God, which is in Chriſte Jeſus our Lorde.* Of this the Spouſe glorieth, ſaying, *Beholde hee commeth leaping ouer the mountaines, and skipping ouer the hils.* To conclude this pointe, wee ſee that the faithful do by the voice of Chriſt perceiue him comming vnto them, and that hee commeth ſwifly ouer all lets.

Now to the next point, wherein is ſet foorth how they ſee him preſent. *Beholde* (ſaith ſhee) *hee ſtandeth behinde our wall, looking through the windowes, ſhewing himſelfe through the gates.* This doth expreſſe that Chriſt doth not in full manner exhibite and ſhew himſelfe preſent vnto his church in this world. He ſtandeth as it were behind the walle, and looketh in at the windowes, ſhewing himſelfe through lateſſes, this is cleare and manifeſt,

nifeſt, for Abraham ſaw him: the Prophets and Moſes ſaw him: yea, all the godlie vnder the law ſaw him: but yet vnder types and ſhadowes, as it were looking in through the windowes. And ſince hee was manifeſted in the fleſh, and hath ſhewed himſelfe more fullie, we ſee him preſent but by faith. *Beholde* (ſaith hee) *I am with you vnto the ende of the worlde.* But yet the Church ſeeth him preſent, but by the eyes of faith. Alſo as Saint Paule ſaith, *We know but in parte*, 1. Cor. 13. We ſee him not fullie, but as it were throgh the windowes. Then marke yet further how ſhee proceedeth in ſetting forth, how hee calleth her: *My welbeloued ſpake and ſaide vnto mee, ariſe my loue, my faire one, and come away.* What meaneth this? Verelie the regenerate, euen the holy ones of God are regenerate but in part while they liue here. There remaineth ſtill in them a lumpe of corruption, and ſo far as that extendeth, they be earthly minded, and euen willingly ſit downe in this world, hauing their affections ſomewhat entangled with the cares and pleaſures of the fleſh: wherefore this is the continuall voice of Chriſte ſounding in their eares, ariſe, O ye, whom I loue, which are faire in my ſight, and come away. Ariſe, ariſe from the loue and delight in earthlie thinges, and ſet your affection vppon the thinges which are aboue. I need not to ſtand in the amplification of this point, the holie ſcripture in all places, both in the Prophets and Apoſtles, is full

of theſe voices which call vpon vs to ariſe vppe in our heartes and mindes from theſe tranſitorie thinges which be vpon the earth, vnto heauen & heauenly thinges. Happie are we if we do heare this voice of Chriſt calling vs ſo louingly, ſo that we obey it. O how dull, how heauie, how lumpiſh and prone to the earth we are, which are ſo little moued with this continuall call of our moſt louing Sauiour? We are readie to mind earthlie thinges, and euen to ſit downe in them, and yet our conuerſation is in heauē, Phil. 3. There is the holy cittie where our freedome is, after that wee ſhould long. We are here but pilgrims and ſtrangers for a time: why doo we then ſit downe? why doo we not, as we are here willed, ariſe and come away? The worldlinges are not moued with this, for they can feele no taſte nor ſweetnes in anie thing but the world, and it is death to them to heare this voice, *ariſe and come away*. Can they willingly part from their treaſure, yea, I may ſay, euen from their God, vpon which they haue ſet their heart, that is to ſay, their golde, their ſiluer, their houſes and their lands? Let it not be ſo with vs: but let vs ariſe with our holie mother, at the voice of Chriſt: let vs in heart and minde aſcend vp into the heauens, *vſing the thinges of this world as though wee vſed them not*, according to the doctrine of the holy Apoſtle, 1. Cor. 7. Moreouer, let vs marke here, how our Lord Ieſus Chriſt lifteth vp his Church from this earth vnto the heauens,

uens, euen by his mightie voice. All the faithfull in themselues, are euen like vnto heauie stones, which doe flie so farre vpward as they are driuen by a force, & when that force ceaseth, they come downe againe apace to the earth. For look how far the Lord with his voice, and loue lifteth vs vp, so far we ascend, and if that work not any longer, we come down with speed.

In the next place we haue the Allegorie, vnder which the Lord doth perswade the Church to arise, and come away from the loue of these earthly thinges, vnto the meditation and desire of the heauenly and spirituall life. It is taken from the times of the yeare. In winter all thinges lie as it were barren vnder frost and snowe, and colde blasts. There is no pleasure to be taken then. But in the spring time all sweete thinges spring, and bud forth, and there is the melodie of birds singing. Then is there comfort and solace to be take in walking abroad. Therefore he saith: *For behold the winter is past, the raine is changed and gone away*. And then hee addeth a description of the spring, by the flowers that appeare, by the singing of birds, by the voice of the turtle, by the figtree bringing forth figs, and the vines with their first grapes casting forth a smell. The perswasion then being drawne from the comparison of the times, wee are to consider how it standeth in the misticall sense. And that is, what the state of all the elect was before their calling, and then what

it is after they be called of the Lord, and regenerate. Before they be called, their hearts bee euen like the earth in winter, vnder the cold froſt and ſtormes of ſinne: for there can no ſweete thing grow vp, there is an vtter barrennes. After that the Lord hath called them, and that they bee regenerate, there is an heauenlie warmth of his ſpirit, and the ſweete dew of his graces, and then the ſweete flowers appeare, then the wholeſome fruits doe bud forth: then is there peace and ioy in the holy Ghoſt, euen heauenly melody, which is repreſented here by the ſinging of the birdes. Then the perſwaſion ſtandeth thus vnto euerie one of the faithfull, which are yet ſomewhat entangled with earthly things, and with the loue of this preſent world, ſo that their affections are not ſo lifted vp, and ſet vpon the deſire of the heauēly thinges as they ought to bee: *Ariſe O my loue, my faire one and come away*: for you ought not to ſet your heartes now vpon things that are vain and tranſitorie, as you did in the dayes of your ignorance, when you lay froſen in your ſinnes. For hauing now been made partakers of the heauenly graces, you muſt take your ſolace and delight in heauenly things. It is a very ſtrange thing to conſider the ſlacknes that is in the holy Saints of God, to ariſe vp from this vaine worlde, vnto the meditation and ioy of the worlde to come. When we haue felt the worke of God in vs, vnto our great ioy and comfort, when the ſweet flowers

ers and holesome fruites haue budded foorth in vs: yet a drousines doth come vpon vs, and wee could euen willinglie seate our selues here below together with those men, which haue their portion in this life. It is no marueile, that men so long as they haue not tasted of heauenly thinges, doe greedilie lay holde of this world, and cleaue vnto it: they know no better, but as I said, is it not very strange and marueilous, that such as haue been euen rauished in their minds with the sweetnes of Christ, should euen waxe colde againe? Thus it falleth out, and therefore she reporteth how hee calleth againe: *arise my loue, my faire one, and come away*. He calleth again and againe, *Arise my loue, my faire one, and come away*. So harde a thing it is to drawe our mindes from this earthly trash. But most specially you may note in this place, the wonderfull kindnesse of Christ Iesus our Lord, who notwithstanding, the dulnes of his chosen, yet esteemeth them so highlie as appeareth by his speeches, *Arise my loue, my faire one, &c.* Wee see plainely by this that the great imperfections which remaine in the regenerate, doo not diminish the loue of Christ towardes them, for they bee still his loue: nor make them deformed nor loathsome in his eyes, for he saith, *my faire one*. From hence wee may draw two very good and necessarie instructions. The one is for our comforte against the temptations of the diuell, who taketh occasion

by the frailties and imperfections, which are in vs, to beare vs in hand that wee be vtterlie deformed in the eyes of Christ, and that he dooth not loue, but hate vs. Beloued, if a man haue touching true faith and repentance, a sinceritie and an vnfained vprightnes of heart, let him be assured, that albeit he be clogged with much corruption of the flesh, the burthen whereof doth make him to sigh and grone, seeming deformed in his owne eyes: yet is he beautifull and deare vnto Christ. Then the other instruction is, that we are to imitate this kindnes of our Lord and Maister. Many when they beholde some thinges amisse in those that professe the Gospell of Christ, neuer looke vpon their vertues, although they shine: but abhorre and despise them. Let vs take heed of this, and let vs entirely loue and esteeme them faire and precious, which feare the Lorde and studie to obey him, although wee see in them otherwise manie great imperfections. This example of Christ leadeth vs hereunto, who calleth her his loue, and his faire one, which yet is so addicted in part vnto this vaine world, and so dull to the meditation and delight in heauenly thinges, that he calleth vnto her againe, and againe: *Arise & come away, arise and come away*. Yea, wee may perceiue this slacknes, and as it were halting dulnes, that is in the Saints, in that he calleth vppon her, and vseth yet a further perswasion vnto her in the next verse, to come foorth vnto him, The

wordes

wordes are theſe: *My doue which art in the cliftes of the rocke, in the ſecret of the ſtayer, ſhewe mee thy face, make mee to heare thy voice, for thy voice is ſweete, and thy face is comely.* The latter part of this ſentence is cleare and eaſie to be vnderſtood, that he calleth vnto her to come into his companie, and to talke with him: adding this encouragement, that ſhe is beautiful, and welfauoured of face, and her ſpeech is vnto him ſweete and pleaſant. But how are wee to take the former parte, which is this: *My doue which art in the cliftes of the rocke, in the hollow place of the ſtayer?* Here is a miſticall ſpeech, which wee are to enquire the meaning of. Firſt, according to the letter, wee know that a doue dooth ſeeke for ſome hole or hollowe place in a rocke, or other high thing, into which ſhee doth enter to be ſecret, & ſafe from the deuouring birdes that would eate her vp, as alſo from the fowler. Euen ſo this doue, this ſimple, meeke, harmeles, and chaſt ſpouſe of the Lord Ieſus, hath her dwelling in the hollowe place of an high rocke, the cliftes whereof are as ſtayres, but ſo as in a rocke, they be ſuch as men cannot clime vp. But what is this rocke then in which this doue reſteth? No man can deny but that this rocke is the moſt high God. You know that the holy Prophet Dauid calleth him, *the rock of his ſaluation.* This is a rocke which none can clime vnto, in the clift of this rocke, the doue dwelleth ſafe. Satan is euen like vnto a greedie

kite, which alwaies lieth in waite for to deuoure her, but ſhe remaineth cloſe in this rocke, where he cannot come at her. What is then to be vnderſtood by the clift or hollow place of this rocke? Surely, it is Gods eternall counſell and election of his Church vnto life and glorie: for it is in that holy counſell of the Lord, euen as in the hollowe place of a moſt high rocke, that this doue dwelleth ſafe. S. Paul ſayeth, *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, and hath this ſeale, God knoweth who bee his*, 2. Tim. 2. verſe 19. And our Sauiour ſheweth, *that it is not poſſible that the elect ſhould periſh.* Matth. 24. It is a madnes for any man to thinke that almightie God can erre, or that hee can change his purpoſe, yea, or that any can withſtand the ſame. Therefore in his eternall counſell and election, as in a moſt ſure rocke, the ſaluation of the Church reſteth. The Prince of darknes hath endeuoured with all his forces to aſſaile the ſame, but all in vaine, Reuel. 12. Thus wee ſee briefly what is meant by this that hee calleth *her his doue which is in the cliftes of the rocke.* Where we note what a weake ſtate the Church were in, if ſhe had not her abode in this rocke. For if ſhee were out of it, looke how the poore harmeles doue is a pray vnto the deuouring hawk, ſo ſhuld ſhee bee vnto her enemies: her ſtrength is in this high rocke, her ſafety in the place in which ſhee remaineth, in her ſelfe ſhee is but as a ſillie doue: from this rocke (as I ſaide) none can plucke her down.

down. For marke what Christ saith touching that matter. *My sheep heare my voice, and I know them, and they follow mee, and I giue vnto them eternall life, and they shal not perish for euer, neither shal anie pluck them out of my hand. My father that gaue them me is greater then all, neither can anie plucke them out of the hand of my father, & and the father are one,* Iohn 10. verse 27. 28. 29. 30. There is then no destroying of this doue, though shee bee in her selfe but as a doue, the hawk, the kite, or the fowler cannot reach vnto her. Blessed bee the Lorde God, who hath thus prouided for the safetie of his poore seruants: and blessed bee the power of his Maiestie, world without end.

Now let vs obserue further, wherefore the bridegrome doth make mention of this, that his doue is in the clifts of the rocke. Surely, he doth herein note the very well head and fountaine of all heauenly blessinges, according as S. Paule openeth the matter, saying, *Blessed bee God euen the Father of our Lorde Iesus Christ, who hath blessed vs with all spirituall blessinges in heauenlie thinges in Christ, as hee had chosen vs in him before the foundation of the world was laide, that wee shoulde bee holie and without blame before him through loue,* Ephes. 1. verse 3. 4. Then further he vseth it as an argument to moue his spouse to the contemplation of heauenlie thinges. As if hee shoulde speake thus vnto her, O my doue, thou art from euerlasting in the secret counsell of the

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moſt high God choſen in me, and ordayned vnto eternal glorie in the heauens: thou art prepared for thinges farre more excellent then theſe that bee tranſitorie, ſet not thine hart therefore vpon them, but lift vp thy minde and thine affection vnto heauenly thinges, meditate vppon them & delight therein, come ſo into my preſence and let me ſee thy face, and heare thy voice. Iudge in your ſelues beloued, is it meete that ſuch as bee choſen to be heyres of eternal glorie, ſhoulde ſet their hart vpō the things of this world? Surely, al the while that they doe ſo, they do euē hide their faces frō Chriſt, they do not vtter their voice vnto him. Marke then I pray you, how that whē the faithful ſoule doth riſe vp in contemplation from theſe earthly things vnto the heauēly, taking her delight and ſolace in them, ſhee doth then ſhew her face vnto Chriſt, ſhe maketh him then to hear her voice. And then is her voice ſweete vnto him, for ſhee vttereth vnto him manie ſweete prayers, prayſes and thankes for all his benefites: and her face alſo is faire and delightſom vnto him. What an encouragement is this to make vs ſeeke after the Lord Ieſus? Doth he call vpon vs in this maner, and doth he thus eſteeme the voice & beautie of the faithful ſoule that commeth vnto him? And ſhall we bee ſlacke? Shall we lie drouſie and dull in our affections? Let this ſame ſpeech of Chriſt bee euen printed in our mindes. *My doue that art in the holes of the rocke, in the ſecret place*

of

of the ſtayre, ſhewe mee thy face, make mee to heare thy voice, for thy voice is ſweete, and thy face is comelie. Is not this a moſt ſweet voice of our Sauiour which hee vttereth vnto euerie one of vs? Ought it not to make vs to run ſwiftlie vnto him? Are not they worthie a thouſand times to periſh, who ſet light by the calling of ſo louing a Sauiour? Ariſe, ſtirre vp your ſelues, be not ſo earthlie minded, but delight in heauenly things, let your minde aſcend vp vnto Chriſt, and talke with him. If he were auſtere, or did deſpiſe vs, it might haue ſome colour for negligence, but when hee doth thus call vpon vs to come, what excuſe can there bee? Let vs not be like to the idolatrous Papiſtes, who ſeek vnto other mediators, and interceſſors, as if wee poore wretches might not bee ſo bolde as to preſume to come vnto him. You ſee how that he willeth his doue to come to him, he doth not ſende her vnto others, ſaying, *ſhew me thy face, make me to heare thy voice.* Shall wee then belieue the diuell, who in the popiſh Church telleth vs, that we muſt deuoutely worſhip and pray to ſome Saint, that ſo wee may procure his or her fauour to entreate Chriſt for vs, becauſe it is ouer great preſumption for vs to come directly vnto him? O beloued, will you giue credite to ſuch, againſt the flat voice of the Lorde? Looke alſo what is written. *Seeing therefore Brethren, that by the bloode of Ieſus, wee may bee bolde to enter into the holie place, by the new and liuing way, which*

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hee hath prepared for vs, through the vaile that is his flesh, and seeing wee haue an high Priest which is ouer the house of God. Let vs drawe neare with a true heart, in assurance of faith, sprinckled in our heartes from an euill conscience, and washed in our bodies with pure water, Heb. 10. vers. 19. 20. 21. 22. Thus are wee willed to goe to the Lorde our God himselfe.

Now it followeth, *Take vs the foxes, the little foxes, which destroy the vines, for our vines haue small grapes*. Here is a charge giuen, and a reason rendred, the charge is, that they should catch the foxes, yea euen the little foxes, the reason is, because they destroy the vines, being yet in shooting forth their small grapes. Here arise diuers questions, as first who giueth this charge, take vs the foxes. Secondly, to whome this busines is cõmitted. Thirdly, what manner of foxes these be, and how they destroy the vines. And lastly, how they are to be takẽ. Touching the first, it is Christ who giueth this charge. Hee hath care ouer his vine, he hath authority to commaund, and the Church doth here reporte his speech, and also vnder his authoritie doth command likewise the same thing. Then for the second, it is out of all doubt that this charge is laide vpon al the faithful pastors and teachers, and godly princes. Concerning the third, these foxes bee false teachers, heretikes & seducers of the Lords people. These bee called foxes, because of their subtiltie and craft:

craft: for all ſorts of heretikes, and falſe teachers, doo winde in themſelues craftely, making a ſhew of truth and holines. *They come in ſheepes cloathing* (as our Sauiour ſaith, Matth. 7. 15.) *But inwardlie they be nothing but rauening* Wolues. It may ſeem very ſtrange how ſuch deſtroying Foxes, yea ſuch grieuous rauening Wolues, as the holy Ghoſt termeth them, Matth. 7. Actes 20. ſhould make ſuch a faire ſhew of trueth and holines, as that they ſhould ſeduce and drawe men from the right way, into the crooked by-waies of hereſies and errors, and ſo deſtroy and waſte the vines. But Saint Paule ſheweth a reaſon, that it is no maruaile, for ſpeaking of the foxes of his time hee ſaieth: *Such falſe Apoſtles are deceitfull workers tranſformed into the Apoſtles of Chriſte: and no maruaile* (ſaieth hee) *for Sathan himſelfe is tranſformed into an Angell of light: therefore it is no great thing, though his miniſters tranſforme themſelues, as though they were the Miniſters of righteouſnes*, 2. Cor. 11. verſe 13. 14. 15. Theſe foxes then haue their ſubtiltie from that greate Foxe the Diuell. Many & differing ſorte of theſe Foxes were in the time of the law, and many alſo haue euer beene vnder the Goſpel, and ſhalbe euer vnto the end of the world: among which the great Romiſh Foxe is the principal. And howſoeuer they be differing in their errors and falſe opinions, yet herein they meet in one, that they be al ſubtile Foxes, waſting & deſtroying the vines

of

of Christ. Here wee may beholde the ſtate of Gods Church, that there ſhall bee alwaies foxes that will creepe in among the vines, and if there bee not (as I may ſay) hunters to hunt & to catch them, wee may eaſily perceiue what perill the young grapes be in. We are therefore to pray inſtantlie vnto the Lord, who hath plãted this vine, that he will alwaies raiſe vp wiſe and vigilant keepers, which may indeede catch theſe wilie foxes: and therein we come to the fourth point, which is, how they muſt bee taken. Doubtles the faithfull miniſters of the Goſpel, are ſaid to catch thẽ, when by the word of God they do ſtronglie confute their hereſies, and by excommunication caſt them forth of the Church. Then ſeeing heretikes being conuinced, yet continue obſtinate, and do ſinne, euen condemned by their owne iudgemẽt as Paul ſaieth, Titus, 3. verſe 11. and ſo will impudentlie goe forwarde to deſtroy the Church, the godly magiſtrates are with ciuill and corporall puniſhments to catch them. Thus we ſee the care which the Lord hath ouer his vine, that the foxes may bee taken, which are readie to deſtroye the grapes, euen in their firſt budding, they woulde ſeduce the faithfull: euen while they bee young & weake.

It followeth, *My welbeloued is mine, and I am his, which feedeth among the lillies.* Vppon all thoſe former ſpeeches of Chriſts, which ſhee repeated, ſhee doth breake foorth into a glorying, not

not glorying indeed in her selfe, but in him: according to that which S. Paule alleageth out of the Prophet, *Hee that glorieth, let him glorie in the Lorde*, 1. Cor. 1. verse 31. And marke what it is that shee glorieth of, for it is in deede that, in which consisteth her whole felicity, namely, the communion, which is betwixte the Lorde Iesus Christ and her, and the sweete fruite which shee receyueth thereby. This holy communion is expressed after this manner, *My welbeloued is mine, and I am his*. Here wee must first note that there is an vnion betwixt Christ and his Church, from whence commeth this communion. Hee is her head, and she is by the spirite vnited vnto him, as his misticall bodie: hee being her head, whatsoeuer is in him, it is hers, and therfore it is said, *that hee is made vnto vs of God, wisedome, righteousnes, sanctification, and redemption*, 1. Cor. 1. *It hath pleased the Father, that in him all fulnes shoulde dwell*. Coloss. 1. verse 19. In him is holines, in him is power,, in him is life eternall: and al these thinges doo flow from him, the head vpon her, for shee saith: *My welbeloued is mine*. Behold then what an incomparable treasure shee dooth boast of, when she saieth, *My welbeloued is mine*? For al the riches, the ioyes, and the glorie of heauen are hers, for hee being hers, all is hers: seeing nothing that is good is wanting in him. From hence it is that the Apostle saieth: *Hee will make her to himselfe a glorious Church*, Ephes. 5. And

then

then on the other ſide ſhe ſaieth, *and Iam his*, by this expreſſing that as he hath redeemed her with his owne blood, yea as hee hath taken vpon him her ſinne, her curſe, her death, and hath made her righteous in himſelfe, and inheritor with him of eternall glorie, ſo ſhe doth conſecrate herſelfe wholie vnto him, ſhe is onely his, ſhe forſaketh al other. She committeth not whordome with idols, ſhe doth not imbrace the doctrine of Diuels, ſhee doth not ſet her heart vppon the vaine delightes and pleaſures of ſinne, but ſhe delighteth in him, he is her ioy, ſhe is pure and chaſt and holy vnto him, and offereth vnto him al the ſweet and delectable fruits of her faith, and loue towardes him. This is that which the holy Apoſtle ſaith, *That he had prepared the Church of Corinth, that he might preſent them as a pure virgin vnto one man, euen to Chriſt*, 2. Cor. 11. verſe 2. What ſhall we ſay then vnto thoſe, which would haue Chriſt to be theirs, but they will be none of his? They ſeeme to boaſt of a faith in his death, and paſſion, as if by the ſame they ſhoulde obtaine righteouſnes and life eternall: but they bee vncleane, they liue not vnto Chriſt, they be not led with his ſpirite, and therefore they bee not his: for what doctrine they profeſſe, they doo not greatlie care and the world and fleſhlie pleaſures are their ioy: fruits they offer vp none vnto Chriſt O happie is that ſoule, which with a true and liuelie faith can ſay, *My welbeloued is mine, and*

and I am his. And happie are they which say hee is theirs, and yet they are not his, they liue not vnto him. Then shee saith, that *hee feedeth among the lillies*: we know that the lillies are faire, sweet, soft and pleasant, and therefore the church saith that her spouse feedeth his flockes among the lilies: which is to let vs know, that he feedeth her with most excellent thinges. Most true it is, that there is nothing vnder heauen that can bee esteemed as a ful shadowe or resemblance of the heauenly Manna, wherewith Christ feedeth the soules of his: but the Church vseth that which may in some sorte resemble it. And now there remaineth onely the last verse of this Chapter, in which the holy Spouse vpon the feeling of those former benefites, concludeth with a vehement prayer vnto Christ, saying, *Vntill the day breake, and the shadowes flie away, returne my Welbeloued, and bee like a Roe or a young Harte, vpon the mountaines of Bether.* The summe of her prayer is, that her Welbeloued from whome shee receiueth all her comfort, would come speedilie vnto her in all her neede, all the time of her peregrination here vppon earth: and not by anie meanes bee seperated from her. Indeede the wordes are misticall, and her first speech is as much as to say vntill the morning, when shee sayeth, *Vntill the day dawne, and the shadowes flie away.* For the night is but the shadowe of the earth, so that the sunne comming vnto our Hori-

zon, with his beames cauſeth all ſhadowes to flie away from the vpper face of the earth. The church vpon earth, is as it were in the night, as ſome take it, vnder the ſhadowes of the law which ſhould, and did flie away after that cleare day of Chriſtes reſurrection? For when our Lord was manifeſted in the fleſh, it was a cleare day in compariſon of the time of the law, when they had all vnder ſhadowes: but we may extend this prayer (as I take it) more fitlie to the ſeconde comming of the bridegrome, for then indeed ſhall be the perfect cleere day, then ſhall all ſhadowes vaniſh and there ſhall bee no obſcuritie, but moſt glorious light. In Pſalme 49. where the Prophet ſpeaketh of the wicked, and ſaieth that the righteous ſhall haue dominion ouer them in the morning, hee ſpeaketh it of the day of the generall iudgement, which is the beginning, and euen as the morning of that euerlaſting moſt glorious light, in which the Saintes ſhall dwel. Shee prayeth then, that til that moſt glorious morning, while ſhe is here in the wildernes, he will be like a Roe, or a young Hart, that is, that hee will come ſwiftly vnto her, for her defence and comfort in all her tribulations. Her enemies are great, and her frailties are many, and ſhee prayeth that he will paſſe ouer all lets of her ſinnes, or whatſoeuer, which ſhee calleth the mountaines of Bether, that is, of ſeperation. We ſee then that this is a moſt ſweete praier of the Church, and which euery faithfull ſoule doth

doth earnestly powre forth vnto him, that he wil come speedily vnto them, to defend and comfort them, while they be here in the middest of cruel enemies, of frailties and calamities. O Lord Iesus come speedily and saue vs, Amen.

THE FIFT SERMON.

Chap. III.

1 *In my bed by night, I sought him whome my soule loueth, I sought him, but I found him not.*

2 *I will arise now and goe aboute in the cittie, by the streetes and by the open places, I will seeke him whome my soule loueth, I sought him, but I found him not.*

3 *The watchmen that went aboute the cittie founde me: haue you seene him whom my soule loueth?*

4 *When I had passed a little from them, then I founde him whome my soule loueth, I laide holde on him, and left him not vntill I had brought him vnto my mothers house, into the chamber of her that conceiued me.*

5 *I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem, by the roes and by the hindes of the field, that yee stirre not vp, nor wake my loue, vntil she please.*

IN the Former Chapter the bride made reporte how her Loue Iesus Christ in most kind manner

ſought her vp, and called vpon her againe and againe to ariſe, and to come forth vnto him from the cares and delights in earthlie things, vnto the meditation and ioy in things that bee heauenlie and ſpirituall. And now in this Chapter ſhe ſheweth how ſhee ſought after him, hee hauing withdrawne himſelfe, and miſſing of him, yet ſhee ceaſed not, nor gaue ouer ſeeking in all places vntill ſhee found him, and brought him home vnto her mothers houſe. Here is then in ſome reſpect a diuerſe and a differing eſtate and condition from the former. For the faithful do not continue alwaies alike, but euen now, Chriſte ſhewing himſelfe vnto them, and calling vppon them, they are euen rapt and enflamed with the loue and ioy of heauenly thinges. By and by euen as a kettle vpon the fire, which while the flame is vehement doth ſeeth faſt, and as the flame ſlaketh, ſo it cooleth: they waxe ſomewhat colder, they fall into ſome drouſines and ſecuritie, they feele not the ioyes and delightes which they did, Chriſt ſeemeth to bee gone from them. And then being eyther touched with ſome affliction, or moued by ſome meanes, they do ſeeke to feele the ſame ioyes that they felt in him before. They would alwaies feele them: for they be ioyes that paſſe al earthlie ioyes, as the Prophet Dauid, Pſal. 4. ſheweth, that the light of Gods countenance put more gladnes into his heart, then the worldly men had when they receiued great plentie

tie of corne and wine and oyle, wherewith they make themſelues merrie. And howe earneſtlie the holy ſpouſe doth ſeeke after her welbeloued her wordes wil declare, which we wil now come vnto. Firſt, let vs conſider the external thinges, which doe repreſent and figure the things which are inuiſible, miſtical, ſpiritual, and heauenly. The Church is compared to a virgin betrothed, who dwelling in her mothers houſe in a cittie, in which there be Watchmen that goe about in the night, and while ſhe is in her bed, her mind runneth vpon her Welbeloued, ſhee cannot endure his abſence, but ariſeth out of her bed, and euen in the night walketh about in the ſtreetes of the cittie for to ſeeke him. Who wil not ſay that this were a vehement loue, that ſhould cauſe a damoſell to doe this? Indeede in this earthly loue it ſhould paſſe modeſty: but in the ſpirituall loue, as we ſhal ſee, it is moſt highlie to bee commended. Let vs come then to the particulars: *In my bed* (ſayeth ſhee) *by night*. What is the bed of the Church? where doth ſhee lie downe to reſt and take eaſe? It is a drowſie ſecuritie which the fleſh bringeth, and in which al the true children of God, according to the fleſh, could bee content to neſtle themſelues, and euen to lye quiet, and warme, were it not that they are moued by the operation of an other ſpirit then their owne: for euen in this bed ſhee ſeeketh. There is a worke wrought within, that wil not let her altogether

forget her Bridegrome: yea the godlie in that coldnes which commeth vpon them, do remember what ioyes they haue felt in Chriſt, and often times they doe wiſh that they did euen continually feede them. But marke then how yet they ſeeke him vpon their bed, which is not to bee allowed. Moſt gladly they would taſte of his ſweetnes, but withall they doe deſire to haue eaſe and pleaſure in the fleſh: faine would they lie ſtill in their warme bed. This (I ſay) is the thing which we all doe couet: faine would wee feele the ioyes of heauen in Chriſt, and faine would wee alſo inioy the delightes of the fleſh: wee woulde haue both, but this will not bee: for marke how hee ſaith, *In my bedde by night I ſought him, whome my ſoule loueth: I ſought him, but I founde him not*, She findeth him not while ſhee is in her bed, hee will not ſo be found. Hee that will finde Chriſte, muſt rowſe himſelfe out of that bed of carnall eaſe. If a man deſire and wiſh to feele the ſweetenes of Chriſt, and will alſo ſtuffe himſelfe with carnall delightes, he ſhall not taſte of him: if he doe taſte, it will vaniſh. Therefore the holy bride here goeth further and ſaith, *I will ariſe*. Behold ſhe ariſeth out of her bed to ſeeke him, for there ſhe cannot finde him, and find him ſhe will. And when commeth ſhe out of her bed? Euen in the night. If there be anie time fit for the bed, it is the night, and then it is moſt inconuenient, and moſt it grieueth to come out of the bed. But ſhee commeth

meth out of her bed, euen in the night for to ſeek her loue. Rather then ſhe will not finde him, ſhee will forgoe and forſake all eaſe and pleaſures in the world. Is this the true Church? and are theſe the right Chriſtians? What ſhall wee ſay then vnto thoſe which will forſake no delighte nor pleaſure to ſeeke Chriſt? They haue a deſire to feele his ſweetnes, but they lie ſtill vppon their bed. O beloued, all you that haue euer taſted, as the holy Apoſtle Peter ſpeaketh, how ſweete the Lord is, 1-Pet. 2. and doo couet to taſte him ſtill, remember continually what is here done: ſeeke him, but come out of your bed. Let not your loue be ſo colde, as to bee withheld from ſeeking the Lorde by any carnal delightes. And beholde yet further, how the ſpouſe doth not onely riſe out of her bed to ſeeke her welbeloued, but alſo goeth foorth into the ſtreets, and open places of the citie, ſeeking al about for him. Here is a very greate loue expreſſed, here is a maruailous zeale. A virgin to riſe out of her bed, and in the vnſeaſonable time of the night to walke about in the lanes and ſtreetes of the cittie: what inconueniences and dangers might enſue? Wel, ſhee caſteth no perils, her minde is ſo ſet vpon her Spouſe, that ſhe cannot reſt, her burning loue towardes him thruſteth her forward to ſeeke him, whatſoeuer come of it. But may ſhee not ſeeme to bee ſcarſe well in her wits? Coulde ſhee not tarrie vntil it were day? or might ſhee not haue patience to expect his

comming vnto her? Surelie the worldlinges do wonder at those, which with feruent zeale and loue seeke after Christ Iesus: and they oftentimes say playnely that they be more then half mad: for when they behold how the seruants of God debarre themselues from sinful pleasures, giuing themselues to reading, hearing, and holy meditation in the lawes of God, that so they may obeye him, they wonder as at a strange thing that they runne not with them vnto the same excesse of riot, as the holy Apostle sayeth, and therefore they speake euil, 1. Pet. 4. vers. 4. When they see men so zealous in seeking Christ, as that neyther the danger of their liues, nor losse of their goods can stay them, doo they not say, what mad fooles bee these? They will not in anie wise buye Christ so deare, they hope to goe to heauen without any such trouble. They see no reason why they should depriue themselues of any pleasures or delightes for to seeke heauenlie thinges. They wil not professe the Gospel, so as to bee mocked and pointed at: If any great man doo but frowne at them, they lay the Bible aside. I thinke you may easilie see the difference betweene these and the faithful, who here vnder the person of the Church are saide to arise out of their beds in the night, and to seeke about in the streetes of the cittie. These bee not withheld with ease and pleasures, nor yet scarred with perils and inconueniences. These do know that Christ is worth the seeking, although they

they ſhoulde loſe their liues for ſeeking of him; Yea, they do approue the doctrine of S. Paul, who ſaith, *that the light and momentany afflictions of this life, are more worthie the glorie that ſhall bee reuealed.* And how wel the Lorde approueth of this loue aud zeale in his ſpouſe, aduenturing herſelfe thus to ſeeke him, you may ſee by his own words in the Goſpel, when he ſaieth, *That excepte a man denie himſelfe, take vppe his croſſe and follow him, hee cannot bee his Diſciple.* And, *whoſoeuer doth not forſake Father and Mother, Wife and goodes, yea and his life, hee is not worthie of him.* But the Spouſe here ſaide, *I will ariſe and goe about in the cittie, by the ſtreetes and open places, and I will ſeeke him whom my ſoule loueth,* then ſhee addeth, *I ſought him, but I found him not.* Heremay two queſtions be demaunded: The one, whether the Church be euer without Chriſt. The other may bee this: whether the Lorde doe not deale leſſe kindly with his Spouſe, in letting her wander about to ſeeke him, and doth not by and by ſhew himſelfe vnto her? Touching the firſt, it is out of all doubt that the Lord Ieſus is alwaies preſent with his Church, but the faithfull haue not alwaies the ſame liuely feeling of his preſence. Hee ſeemeth to hide himſelfe away, and to be abſent: and then doe the godlie labour to haue a more full and perfect ſence of his preſence, it is his ſecret worke in them that they ſeeke. And now for the other queſtion, that Chriſt doth ſuffer his

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to ſeeke him through ſo manie difficulties, and doth not at the firſt ſhew himſelfe, it is not to be imputed vnto anie want of kindnes, or for her hurt, but for her benefit, for it is for the trial and exerciſe of her faith, her loue and patience. Yea, it is to ſtirre vp and to kindle her affection more vehementlie for to ſeeke after him. Finally, it is to teach al the godlie to make precious account of retayning Chriſt with them. For when they are fallen into drowſines, and ſo haue leſſe feeling: it is not ſo eaſie a matter to find the Lord againe. Continue therefore your prayers and meditations, and al holie exerciſes, by which the liuely feeling of Chriſts preſence is continued. Wel, while ſhee thus ſought him all about, and found him not, the Watchmen that went about in the cittie found her. The Watchmen in a city doe paſſe to and fro, to ſee if there be any ſtirring whereby hurt may ariſe, and theſe doe finde her now in the ſtreetes. Who may theſe Watchmen bee? If the cittie bee the viſible Church (for the faithful doo dwel ſcattered in the viſible Church among many counterfeyte worſhippers of God) then theſe watchmen are the Paſtors, who are to watch ouer the citie, as the Lord telleth the Prophet Ezechiel, that hee had made him a Watchman. But then if it bee ſo, why doe not theſe Watchmen lead her vnto Chriſt, for that is their office and dutie? Surely, it doeth often fal out, that the ſhepheards themſelues, euen the Watch-

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men ouer the houſe of Iſrael, do not know Chriſt aright, but are blinded with worldly pompe and couetouſnes. Shee doth demaund of them, if they haue ſeene him whom her ſoule loueth, but there is no mention of her anſwere. Either they made none, or elſe ſuch an anſwere as could do her no good. Wel, ſhee goeth but a little paſt them, & ſhee findeth her welbeloued. Then we ſee plainly that ſhee findeth him at the laſt. This is according to the promiſe, *Aske and yee ſhall haue, ſeek and ye ſhall finde, knocke and it ſhall bee opened vnto you. For whoſoeuer asketh receiueth, and he that ſeeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it ſhall bee opened*, Matth. 7. verſe 7. 8. Here is a goodly comfort vnto al thoſe which with heartie affection doo ſeeke after Ieſus Chriſt: for though they ſeeme for to looſe their labour, yet let them not fainte nor waxe wearie, for in the ende they ſhall finde him. He is not out of the cittie, albeit the blinde Watchmen doe not ſee him. Hee wil ſhew himſelfe moſt comfortably vnto them that ſeeke him with an vpright heart, if they giue not ouer. Wel are wee if wee bee wiſe and ſtrong in this point, for many there bee which beare the name of Chriſtians, which ſeeke not Chriſt at al, but doe deſpiſe and neglect al holy exerciſes. Others there bee which doe ſeeke, but they doo not continue ſeeking, they faint, they wax weary, and ſo giue ouer: becauſe they feele not the quickning power of Chriſt euen at the firſt, or

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after ſome ſhort time, they doo euen relente and giue ouer. Let vs learn here of the Spouſe, not to giue ouer, let vs paſſe through al lets, daungers, and inconueniences, ſeeing in the ende wee ſhal not miſſe of him. Wee are often brought into doubt of the truth in ſome pointes, becauſe the ſect-maiſters and heretiques doo make ſuch a ſhew of truth for their falſe opinions. We are alſo clogged with ſinfull luſtes, which do diſquiet our mindes. Chriſt alone is to rid vs from al theſe ſnares, and though it ſeeme long oftentimes before we can get out of them, yet in the ende wee finde deliuerance: for all that finde Chriſt, are freed from danger, and he that continueth to the ende, he ſhall be ſaued, Matth. 24. But now let euery one beware that they ſeek the Lord in ſimplicity and ſinglenes of heart: for ſuch as are puffed vp with pride and vaine glorie, when they come vnto any knowledge, fall away againe, and many ſuch there haue euer beene. Of all others, a man woulde take them to bee the moſt earneſt ſeekers after Chriſt: and in the end, there is, euen the dogge to his vomite. They ſeemed to eſchew the filthie pollutions of the world, with an exceeding great loathing and deteſtation, and ſuddainely they doo euen turne backe vnto them, and doo become ringleaders vnto ſondry kindes of lewdnes. O wicked pride and vaine-glorie, whether doeſt thou caſt men? If they had while they did runne in the way, ſought Chriſte in

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ſinglenes of heart, ſeeking indeed to bee ridde of their errors, and to haue all euil luſtes ſubdued in them, they ſhould not haue miſſed of him. Behold the cunning of the diuel, in ſetting them ſo on worke: for now if we call vpon men to bee zealous and feruent in ſeeking the Lord, they can obiect, what is become of the vehement ſeeking of ſuch and ſuch men? O beloued, learne of the Church here, to continue ſtill our earneſt ſeeking and learne by the feareful example of thoſe men, how good it is to ſeeke with humilitie, and with all lowlines of minde, not glorying in our ſelues, but in the Lord. Remember that admonition of the Bleſſed Apoſtle, who ſaieth, *With feare and trembling worke out your ſaluation: for it is God that worketh in you both the will and the deede, of his good pleaſure*, Phil. 2. 12. 13. Let vs bee afraid of our own afflictions which are crooked and peruerſe: let vs not leane vnto our own reaſon which is blinde, for if we doo, then ſhall wee wilfullie and ſtifly ſtand to maintaine our owne opinions: wee ſhall bee ready to ſhew our wit in maintaining errors. Neither let vs delight to haue our own wil fulfilled, but be ready to deny it, that we may fulfil the holy wil of the Lord. In a word, let vs feare and ſuſpect whatſoeuer is of our ſelues, and ſeeke to bee wholy directed and guided by the ſpirit of the Lord. This is the true and the right ſeeking of Chriſt, and after this maner the holy Spouſe ſeeketh him, and if we continue

nue thus ſeeking, wee ſhal with her finde him at the laſt.

Now when ſhee had founde him, what doth ſhe then? Shee telleth vs here what ſhee did. For marke her ſpeech: *I* (ſaith ſhee) *laide holde of him and left him not, vntill I had brought him vnto my Mothers houſe, into the chamber of her that conceyued mee.* Chriſt is a moſt glorious king, is not this then ouer rude dealing, that ſhe ſaith ſhe laide holde on him? May the faithful vſe this boldnes? Surely, the laying holde on Chriſt is only by faith, which goeth not with any vnreuerend dealing, and the Lord is ſo farre off from diſalowing it, that it doth moſt highlie pleaſe him. This is the maruailous kindnes of our Lorde, which Satan would beare vs in mind by his miniſters, (I meane the Papiſts) to be nothing ſo. O ſay they, it is ouer much ſawcines, for ſinful men to come directly vnto Chriſt, and to lay holde on him. It becommeth them in more humble manner to ſeeke vnto ſome that be inferiour, Some Saint or Angell, which may ſpeake for them. Yea, but doth the holy Church here ſo? No, no, ſhee ſeeketh onely after Chriſt, her mind is bente onelie vpon him, and vpon him directly ſhe laieth holde with the hand of faith and draweth him vnto her. And hee doth not condemne it in her as a rude part, but it is her praiſe and glorie, ſo to lay hold on Chriſt, and let not vs bee afraide in this pure ſorte to lay holde on him, for you can no way ſo high-

highly pleaſe the Lord, as by laying holde on him with a true and liuely faith. When the Church had ſought him vpon her bed, but found him not when ſhe had alſo ſought him about in the ſtreets of the cittie, but found him not: now when ſhe doth finde him how earneſtly ſhe layeth hold on him. Surely the Lorde doth withdraw himſelfe ſometime from the godly, and as it were hide himſelfe, ſo that they doe not feele the comfort and peace in him that they woulde. Then doo they ſeeke him with care and griefe, then alſo miſſing of him, they ſee what it is to want him, and therefore ſo ſoone as euer he ſheweth himſelfe, they ſpeedilie lay holde on him, as hauing found their onely treaſure and felicity. O howe the faithful run vnto Chriſt, and with what earneſt deſire they lay holde on him, that they may ſtil be partakers of his ſweet and precious comfortes. Here alſo we may note the force and efficacie of the true and liuely faith: how it doth not onely lay holde of the Lord, but alſo keepeth and retayneth him faſt, and wil not let him goe, for ſo hee her wordes: This is a verie maruelous thing, that the almighty ſhould be ſo held and retayned euen as it were with a violent force and power. But ſurely he hath by his couenant and promiſe, bound and tied himſelfe vnto vs: ſo that whoſoeuer layeth holde of the Lord, with the hande of faith, it is vnpoſſible that hee ſhould depart from them. This peraduenture wil ſeeme harde vnto

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ſome: for it may be ſaid, ſhe laieth hold on him, and will not let him goe, but if he would, could he not haue brake from her? Becauſe you ſay it is vnpoſſible that hee ſhould depart from them, that lay hold on him with the hand of faith. Let men conſider, that it is vnpoſſible that God ſhuld breake his couenant and promiſe, it is vtterly vnpoſſible that God ſhould lie. Wel hee hath promiſed, he hath couenanted and ſworne, that al which belieue in his ſonne ſhal not be confounded. Wherebyit is manifeſt, that Chriſt cannot depart from the ſoule which belieueth aright in him: we are not to take theſe ſpeeches, as if Chriſt would depart from any that truſt in him, but onlie I doo note her ſpeech, when ſhe ſaieth that ſhe did lay holde on him, and would not let him go, declaring with what force ſhe did hold, and retaine him. What are we then more to ſeeke after then this ſame mightie hand of faith? *It is the rocke againſt which the gates of hell cannot preuaile*, as we may reade, Matth. 16. *It is the ſhielde that quencheth all the fierie dartes of the euill one*, Epheſ. 6. *It is* (as S. Iohn ſayeth) *our victorie by which we ouercome the world.* 1. John 5. Then it ſubdueth the prince of the world, it bringeth vnder al the power of the diuel. And as Iaakob did wreſtle with the Angel, and woulde not let him goe, and therefore he called him Iſrael, ſaying, thou haſt power with God, thou ſhalt preuaile with men, Gen. 32. So all that belieue, bee true

Iſrae-

Iſraelits, they lay hold vpon Chriſt by faith, they wreſtle and preuaile with God. Great then is the praiſe and the glorie of faith, which if men did throughlie waye and conſider, they would not be ſo cold and ſo careleſſe in ſeeking after it. They would not bee ſo negligent in reading and hearing of the holy word of God, with little or no meditation in the ſame. They would not bee ſo fainte and feeble in prayer, but inſtantlie they would call vpon the Lord to increaſe their faith, whereby they may thus preuaile by laying holde of Chriſt, and retayning him ſtil with them. O what labour ſhould we refuſe in this thing? How doo men labour and toile in the world for to get riches which are tranſitorie? Who is able to expreſſe their induſtrie and care, how they do beate their braines about it day and night? Would to God that we had but half ſo much care, and that wee would indeede take but euen halfe ſo much paines to ſeeke after this rich and incomparable iewel of faith, this hand which laieth ſo faſt hold on Chriſt, that it wil not let him goe. Indeed the excellencie of it is in reſpect of him, whom it holdeth. In Chriſt there is all fulnes of good things. *Whoſoeuer is in him, there is to them no condemnation*, Rom. 8. 1. They be moſt happie and bleſſed for euermore: then ſee what this hand obtaineth. On the other ſide, ſuch as be not in Chriſt, they be in their ſinnes, they be void and deſtitute of al good things, they be vnder condemnation.

When Christ is laide open, and publiſhed vnto them, ſo that in ſome ſorte they are made to ſee wherin all happines reſteth, where the onelie remedie againſt all miſeries is, yet they are neuer the better, they haue no hād to lay hold of Chriſt nor to retaine him, but they doo ſtil languiſh in their miſeries: for that is proper onely to the Church and her children, which is here ſpoken, I laide hold on him, and left him not vntill I had brought him vnto my mothers houſe, into the chamber of her that conceiued me. Againe, here is an effectuall laying holde on him by the bride, ſo that ſhee retayneth him to dwel with her for euer. For that is to be gathered by this, when ſhee bringeth him vnto her mothers houſe, and into the chambers of her that conceiued her. The faithful ſoule is not contented, neither doth it ſatisfie her in ſome ſlight manner to lay holde on Chriſt for a time, but ſhee wil leade him home, euen into the inner chamber, of her minde, that ſo he may dwel in her, and ſhee in him. Then ſhe liueth, or as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, Chriſt liueth in her, Galath. 2. verſe 20. The holy Ghoſt calleth vppon men *to open the gates and the euerlaſting dores*: that is the dores of their hearte, *and the King of glorie ſhall come in*. Pſalme 24. She dooth here open the gates and the dores, and leadeth him in. What good thing can be wanting where the king of glory entreth in for to dwell? Hee is the Lorde of hoaſtes who is ſtrong and mightie

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in battaile. He doth subdue sinne, and putteth the prince of darknes to flight, yea he chaseth away all euill where hee dwelleth. No maruaile then that she will not let him go; but leadeth him into the chambers of her that conceiued her. This is a great misterie and a secret: for although men doe professe the name of our Lord Iesus Christ in word, yet for the most part they know not what this meaneth. They know not I say, what it is to bring Christ home into the Chamber: he is in the heauens, a nearer presence of him they doe neither feele nor make account of. Christ indeede is in their mouth, but the spirit of pride, of enuie, of selfloue, of couetousnes, of lecherie, and of all vncleannes, yea euen the spirite and power of the diuel doth dwell in their heart. Their workes doo declare no lesse, for all their filthie speeches and wicked deedes doo manifestlie shew that they bee the children of that wicked one. As you may read how our Sauiour doth reason against the Iewes, saying, *Yee doo the workes of your Father, and you are of your Father the diuell*, Iohn, 8. And S. Iohn saieth, *Be not deceiued hee that worketh righteousnes, is righteous, as hee is righteous, hee that committeth sinne is of the diuell*, 1. Iohn. 3. verse 7. 8. If you will then be the true children of the Church, lay holde on Christ, and bring him home into your hearts that there his life and power may appeare. But as it was said, here it may now bee demaunded, what mother

hath the Church? Who is ſhe that conceiued her? Is there any ſpouſe of Chriſt but one? I anſwere, there is but one Church, one miſticall bodie of Chriſt, and one ſpouſe: but alwaies that parte of the Church, which is vpō erth is called the daughter of the church of former times. As we ſee how the generations paſſe away, and euermore there ariſe vp new, which for the time are as a young virgin and daughter to the former. There is a continuall ſucceſſion, and the Church doth euermore bring forth vnto the Lord, ſo that euermore the church here in the world may ſay, ſhe leadeth Chriſt into the Chambers of her that conceiued her. And here is alſo to be noted, that ſhe leadeth him not vnto a ſtrange habitation, but vnto the ſame where her mother did entertaine him. For there is one faith, one hope, one doctrine, and therefore euery Church for the time vppon earth entertaineth Chriſt as her mother before her did. And in very deede, if you will approue your ſelues to be right Chriſtians, looke to the ſteps of the ancient Chriſtians, euen of the mother Churches vnder the Prophets and Apoſtles, and doo euen as they did.

And now ſee what followeth: *I charge you, O daughters of Ieruſalem by the roes and by the hindes of the fielde, that yee ſtirre not vppe, nor wake my loue, vntil ſhee pleaſe.* I noted before, that it is doubtful whether Chriſt or the Church did vtter this ſpeech: for the word (*loue*) is feminine,

and

and so may bee taken of Christ. Indeed it seemeth in this place to be the speech of the Bride: for hauing with long seeking found her welbeloued, and brought him home vnto her mothers house, she is much afraide least he should haue any occasion giuen vnto him to depart, or to withdraw himselfe from her, and therefore layeth this straight charge vppon her daughters, euen binding them with an oath, to beware least they awake and stirre him vp, before he please: For as I noted before in the other chapter, where we had this charge euen word for word, the daughters of Ierusalem are to take heed, least by their rude and vnreuerend behauiour, they cause the Lorde for to depart, seeing that when he doth as it were hide himselfe from his Church, so that shee suffereth great affliction, it is for the euil behauiour of manie which professe his name. The Lord giue vs his aboundant grace, and make vs carefull to retaine him. Amen.

THE SIXT SERMON.

Chap. III.

6 *Who is ſhee that commeth vppe out of the wilderneſſe like pillars of ſmoake, perfumed with Myrrhe and Incenſe, and with all the ſpices of the Merchant.*

7 *Beholde his bed which is Salomons: threeſkore ſtrong men are round about it, of the valiant men of Iſraell.*

8 *They all handle the ſword, and are expert in war, euery man hath his ſword vpon his thigh, for the feare by night.*

9 *King Salomon made himſelfe a palace of the trees of Lebanon.*

10 *He made the pillars thereof of ſiluer, and the ſauement thereof of golde, the hangings thereof of purple, whoſe middeſt was paued with the loue of the daughters of Ieruſalem.*

11 *Come foorth yee daughters of Zion, and beholde the King Salomon with the crowne, wherewith his Mother crowned him in the daye of his mariage.*

marriage, and in the daye of the gladneſſe of his heart.

THe Church ſought Chriſt, and neuer gaue ouer ſeeking vntill ſhee hadde found him, and brought him home vnto her mothers houſe, into the chābers of her that conceiued her. Chriſt indeede ſheweth himſelfe preſent vnto his deare Spouſe here below, but not that ſhee is to make account that his ſpeciall abode with her, is here on earth, but that ſhee muſt aſcend vppe vnto his houſe, euen vnto the Chambers of the heauenly palace, for to that ende and purpoſe doth hee come downe vnto her. Here therefore is ſhewed the effect of this her finding and laying holde of him, namely, that he hath perfumed her with his ſweete graces, and made her fit and meete to aſcend vp with him vnto his royall palace which is here deſcribed. Come then vnto the wordes, *Who is ſhee that aſcendeth vppe out of the wildernes, &c.* The Bridegrome (as it ſeemeth) doth vtter this ſpeech, not being ignorant, or hauing the leaſt doubte who ſhee is, but in waye of admiration or wonderment, to draw vs to the due conſideration of the greatnes, and excellencie of the thing. It is no ſmall worke that the bride, euen the whole companie of the faithfull do in heart and minde aſcend vppe into the heauens. Our affections, and all the powers of our

minde are wholy of themſelues, bent downwarde to this world, euen to the earth & earthly things. It is Chriſt then that maketh her to aſcend vp out of the wilderneſſe : it is the mighty power and operation of his grace. For marke how when ſhe had ſo earneſtly ſought after him, when at the laſt ſhe had found him, when ſhe had layde hold on him, and would not let him goe vntil ſhee had brought him vnto her mothers houſe, and euen into the Chambers, how it followeth by and by, who is this that aſcendeth vp out of the wilderneſſe? This is it that I ſaid, Chriſt commeth down vnto his ſpouſe here on earth, that hee may cauſe her to mount vp into the heauens, which we ſee dooth follow : ſuch is the power and effectuall working of his grace. But what is the wildernes out of which ſhee aſcendeth? It is the world, euen the corrupt and miſerable eſtate that wee are all in by nature. In a wilderneſſe there is no tilling, no ſowing, no planting, no dreſſing, no good fruite, but all lyeth waſte, barren and deſolate. Euen ſo it is with all mankinde, by nature there is nothing but barrennes. God planteth, tilleth and dreſſeth his Church, ſhe is (as S. Paul ſaith, 1. Cor. 3.) Gods husbandrie, ſhee is made fruitful to the Lorde : but the whole world beſide, out of which ſhee aſcendeth, dooth remaine as a moſt deſolate and barren wilderneſſe. There groweth not in it any one ſweete thing at al, but all noyſome ſtinking

and

and abominable weedes. All the godlie which are here repreſented vnder the perſon of the ſpouſe, doo aſcend out of this barren gulfe. And the worke is wonderful and marueilous: but eſpeciallie if you marke how ſhee aſcendeth vppe. It is ſaid, *euen like pillars of ſmoke*. What meaneth this? That muſt you gather by the wordes that follow, which are theſe, *perfumed with myrrhe and incenſe, and with all the ſpices of the Merchante*: or as it may rightly be tranſlated, more excellent then al the duſt of the Merchant. The godly doo not while they liue here aſcend vppe in body into the heauens: but their faith: their hope: their loue, their prayers and thankeſgiuing, with ſuch like, doe like pillars of ſmoke of ſweete incenſe, aſcend vp before the Lord: and all theſe pillars of ſmoke of ſweete odors ariſe ſtom hence, that Chriſt hath perfumed her with the heauenlie graces of his ſpirit, which he calleth myrrhe and incenſe, which hee ſayeth doth excel al the duſt, that is to ſay, al the ſweet ſpices of the merchant. She is then perfumed with the graces of Chriſt, and ſo made ſweete and fit to aſcend vp to God in the heauens. She aſcendeth vp out of a wilderneſs, where no good nor ſweete thing groweth, and yet ſhe aboundeth with al ſweete perfumes, which aſcend vp euen like vnto pillars of ſmoke. Is not this a wonderful thing? From whence hath ſhee theſe ſweete fruites in the wilderneſſe? Euen as I tolde you before, ſhe ſought him whom her

her ſoule loueth, yea ſhe neuer gaue ouer ſeeking vntill ſhe had found him, ſhe layde hold on him, and would not let him depart: and here is the fruite of her labour, he perfumeth her with all ſweete and precious thinges, and maketh her fit for to aſcend vp into the heauens. O Beloued, ſhall not this inflame our mindes to ſeeke after Chriſt, and neuer to giue ouer for any trauaile, inconuenience or danger, vntill wee finde him? Yea to lay faſt holde on him, and to retaine him, that he may thus perfume vs with his ſpirite and gracious giftes, and ſo make vs fit to dwell with him in the heauens? In our ſelues, and of our own nature wee ſtinke, wee are loathſome and abominable, fit for the ſtinking pit of hel, and not meet for to aſcend vp into the heauenly palaces. If we finde him, and as the holy ſpouſe ſaith, laye holde on him, and retaine him, he wil indeed perfume vs, and make vs full of al ſweete thinges, through which wee ſhal bee acceptable vnto God. They are worthie to lie and rot in their filthines, and ſo with deteſtation to be caſt out of the preſence of the Lord, who will not ſeeke vp ſo ſweet and gracious a Sauiour. What is the cauſe that men generally are ſo addicted vnto this world, ſo that they doo not aſcend vppe out of it? And what is the reaſon that they bee not perfumed with ſweete thinges, but doe caſt forth continually the ſtinke of vncleane and abominable vices? Surelie euen this, they doe not with the holy Bride ariſe

out

out of their beds to ſeeke Chriſt, and neuer ceaſe vntill they haue found him. No, no, there is ſmal and colde ſeeking after him. I would to God it might enter into our mindes, and bee throughlie fixed in vs, what a treaſure we ſhall obtaine, when we finde him. Some wil replie, that they ſeeke him, but they cannot finde thoſe thinges which the ſpouſe here found. It may be (ſay they) Chriſt will not bee founde of all that ſeeke him. They could be content for to ſeeke him more earneſtly, if they were ſure that they ſhould finde him. Surely this is the tempter, this is our owne negligence and vnbeliefe, and it is very good for vs to beware of it. Wee ſee what wonderful goodlie things they attaine vnto, which finde Chriſt, laying hold on him, and not leauing him. Wee ſee alſo by the ſpeeches of the Spouſe, that he is not eaſily found. If wee ſeeke a little and in cold maner, euen as it were vpon our bed: becauſe wee find him not, wee are readie to imagine, and the diuel doth alſo ſuggeſt, that it is but loſt labour for to ſeeke him. But doubtles al thoſe that ſeeke him in vprightnes of heart, and that ſeeke him diligentlie and carefullie, not giuing ouer, ſhall finde him. Is it not his promiſe, *Seeke and you ſhall finde, aske and you ſhall receiue, knocke and it ſhall bee opened vnto you? For whoſoeuer asketh receiueth, and hee that ſeeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it ſhall bee opened.* Matth. 7.7.8. If therefore we haue ſought, and yet finde not that

we

we are perfumed with myrrhe and incenſe, ſweeter then al the Spices of the Merchant, and that we doe aſcend vp out of this barren wilderneſſe, let vs know that wee haue not ſought ſo feruentlie as we ought to ſeeke: let vs then bee more diligent.

It followeth, *Beholde his bedde which is Salomons: threeſcore ſtrong men are rounde aboute it of the valiant men of Iſra-el. They all handle the ſworde, and are expert in warre: euerie man hath his ſworde vppon his thigh for the feare by night.* It was ſaide in the former verſe, that ſhee aſcended vp out of the wilderneſſe. And whether doth ſhe aſcend, but vnto the habitation of the great king her Spouſe, to lodge and to dwell with him for euer? Here is therfore vnder a ſhadow a deſcription of that heauenly lodging. The ſhadowe is taken from the Bride bed, and from the bride chamber of king Salomon. For Chriſt is the true Salomon, euen the king of peace, of whom Salomon that wrote this Song was a figure. It was and is the manner, that kings haue euery night a watch about their lodging by part of their gard, that there be no treaſon wrought, but that the king may ſleepe without feare. It ſeemeth by this place, that king Salomon had euery night threeſcore valiant men of his gard, experte in battell, and with their ſwords girded to their thigh, that did keepe the watch, that ſo hee might ſleepe in ſafetie. And becauſe it falleth out ſometimes that treache-

treacheries bee committed by ſome that are put in truſt to watch aud to garde, here is mention made that theſe are of the valiant men of Iſrael, they bee true hearted and truſtie. Needfull it is that they ſhould bee no weake ones, nor no cowardly perſons: and more needful it is alſo, that they ſhould be in a readines, and haue their weapons prepared, and moſt needfull of all, that they be ſuch as will not bee corrupted any way, but haue faithful hearts. If they were mighty and valiant men, and right wel appointed, and not of the valiant men of Iſrael, that is to ſay, ſound and true hearted, the danger were the greater. But Salomõs bed is ſafely garded with theſe valiant men of Iſrael, whereby is figured, how ſafely from all danger and feare, the Church ſhal reſt with Chriſt in the heauens. Here be manie enemies which ſeeke to deſtroy the Church. Satan the prince of darkenes with al his Angels, & with al the infernal powers waiteth day and night to worke all the miſchiefe that hee can. He raiſeth vp cruel and bloody tyrantes which breath out threatninges and terror, as if they would vtterly ſeperate her from Chriſt. But when the faithfull haue found Chriſt, and hee hath ſo repleniſhed them with the giftes and graces of his Spirit, that they mount vp into the heauens by a true and liuely faith, with feruẽt zeale and vehement affection, then howſoeuer they bee troubled, moleſted, afflicted, and diſquieted here in the worlde,

yet

yet they reſt ſafe and in peace with him aboue. That place is ſafely garded, thether can no enemy approach to worke any miſchiefe, or to put the ſpouſe in any feare. He, euen that heauenly Salomon, is garded with his mightie Angels, which are miniſtring ſpirits, ſent foorth to miniſter for their ſakes, which ſhal inherite ſaluation. Heb. 1. Theſe be true Iſraelites indeed, holy and faithful: no vnfaithfulnes can come neere vnto them. Let vs therefore touching this pointe remember theſe wordes of our Sauiour vnto his Apoſtles, when hee was euen readie to departe from them out of this world, ſaying, *Theſe thinges haue I ſpoken vnto you, that in mee you might haue peace, in the world you ſhall haue afflictions: but bee of good comforte, for I haue ouercome the worlde.* Iohn 16. verſe 33. Then howſoeuer the caſe doth ſtande with the godly here in the world, they reſt in ſafetie and peace with Chriſt. But this is not al which the Bride ſhal obtaine, by her aſcending vp out of the wilderneſſe, vnto the palace of her welbeloued, for it falleth out that one may dwell ſafe from daunger, and bee wel garded in a place of ſmal eaſe and pleaſure: marke therefore what a deſcription now followeth of the heauenlie bride-chamber, how rich, how goodlie and precious it is to dwel in. For here it is figured by King Salomons bride chamber. *King Salomon made himſelfe* (ſaieth our engliſh tranſlation) *a palace of the trees of* Lebanon. Some take it to

be

bee a Coach, in which hee was carried with his Queene. The word is *apirion*, which is not found elsewhere in all the holie Scriptures. It is deriued of *Parah*, which signifieth to flourish and bring forth fruit. So that most fitlie it may be here taken for a royall and sumptuous Bride chamber, which king Salomon built in his owne palace. This Bride chamber (which was for the daughter of Pharaoh king of Egypt, whome Salomon maried, and for whome he built an house, as the holy Scripture doth witnes, 1. King. 9. vers. 24.) touching the timber, was of the trees of Lebanon, that is of goodly Cedars: for Lebanon in the Scriptures is renowned for Cedars: That kinde of woode is very durable. Then it is saide that the *pillars were of siluer and the pauemente of golde, and the hanginges of purple*. Here is a goodly rich thing, and pleasant to lodge in. And then it is added further, *whose middest was paued with the loue of the daughters of Ierusalem*. This is more darke to be vnderstood then the rest. The middest is to be taken for the inwarde partes of this Chamber which were paued with loue, that is, as wee may vnderstand it, wrought with louelie or most excellent workes, by the daughters of Ierusalem. For so I take it this latter clause is most fitly to be translated, rather then to say of the daughters of Ierusalem. For hee speaketh of the excellent needle workes of the stuffe and furniture, which the skilfullest needle women in Ierusalem

ruſalem had wrought. Here then are all thinges rich and ſumptuous, yea theſe thinges are rare & excellent, euen among the greateſt princes of the world. For the glorie of king Salomon did much excel, hee being a figure of the heauenlie king of glorie our Lorde Ieſus Chriſt: but they are ſcarſe worthie to be named, or eſteemed to bee a ſhadowe of that heauenly palace, which is here reſembled by them. For what are buildings of Cedar? what is ſiluer or golde or purple? yea what are al the fineſt needle workes vnto that heauenly habitation of Chriſt, in which his Church ſhal dwel with him for euer? Wee ſee alſo how the new Ieruſalem, the cittie of God, is ſhewed vnto S. Iohn in a viſion, Reuel. 21. and there deſcribed to be moſt rich and precious, as being of moſt pure golde ſhining through like Chriſtal and of pearle. Then beſides the ſafetie that the godlie ſhal reſt in with Chriſt, where no aduerſe power ſhal approach any way to hurt or annoy them, their dwelling ſhal be alſo moſt delectable and glorious. True it is that Salomons Queene did dwel in a palace verie goodly and ſumptuous, & ſuch as the very kings and princes of the earth might euer wonder at, ſo great was the glory and royaltie which his God gaue him. But yet the ſame palace that ſhee dwelt in, & all her glory, was nothing to the palace which chriſt hath prepared for his beloued ſpouſe the church Thē is there ſufficient cauſe to moue al the chil-

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dren of God to aſcend vp out of this wildernes, vnto this heauenlie palace. And aboue al things, let vs marke this wel, into what manner of place, and vnto what manner of perſon we muſt aſcend vp vnto: for that will put vs in minde, what manner of perſons we ought to bee: vncleane perſons are not meet to enter, and dwell in ſuch a palace: As it is written, *There ſhall enter into it no vncleane thing, neither whatſoeuer worketh abhomination or lyes*, Reu. 21. 27. And iudge in your ſelues, are the vnholy, that ſtinke in their wickednes, in any ſort to be ioined vnto the Lord Ieſus Chriſt? No verilie brethren, al thar ſhal dwell with him, muſt be ſweete and cleane. And therefore marke how the Spouſe is ſaid *to aſcende vp out of the wildernes, perfumed with Myrrhe and Incenſe, ſweeter then all the ſpices of the Merchant*. Shee is decked and made ſweete, to goe dwell in ſuch a place, and with ſuch a perſon. O Lord how little is this regarded? It doth pleaſe men wel, to heare that the heauenlie habitation is prepared, & that the godly ſhall there dwell with Chriſt their king, in euerlaſting glorie. And ſome ſpeeches they caſte forth, expreſſing a deſire to come to the ſame: but where are they almoſt, which ſeeke to be perfumed and made ſweete aud fit to goe vp thether? Doo not many which profeſſe that they hope to goe thether, and to dwell with the Lord of glorie, yet ſtill continue in their vncleannes, and doo not ſeeke to purge themſelues, and to bee

perfumed with the ſweete graces of the holie Ghoſt? Theſe ſay that they looke for the life to come, but I pray you can it be ſaide of them, that they aſcende vp perfumed with Myrrhe and Incenſe? There are none that aſcend vp to heauen, but they that are ſweete. Such filthie ſlouens are fit to dwell in the ſtinking dungeon of hell, and thether they ſhall be thruſt, vnles they repent & alter their manners.

Now let vs come to the laſt verſe of this chapter, which is in theſe words: *Come forth ye daughters of Zion, and beholde the king Salomon with the Crowne, wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his Mariage, and in the daye of the gladnes of his heart.* Firſt, it is not eaſie to proue or to ſhew for certainety, who vttereth this ſpeech. We ſee it is directed vnto the daughters of Zion: the ſumme of it is to incite them to come foorth, and to beholde the glory of king Salomon, and by king Salomon is meant the Lord Ieſus: he is the true Salomon, he is the king of peace. It is then his crowne and glorie, which theſe daughters of Zion are willed to come forth & behold. It is not like then that Chriſt vttereth this, but rather wee may take it to bee the ſpeech of the church vnto all her daughters: here may ariſe another doubt: Is Chriſt this king Salomon, that is crowned with honour and glorie in the day of his mariage? Is he crowned by his mother? Who is this his mother? And how doth ſhe ſet this crown

vpon

vpon his head? And when was hee maried? True it is that the holy Scriptures doo ſet foorth that Chriſt is as yet but betrothed, & that, as we haue ſhewed before, the daye of his mariage ſhall be at the laſt day, euen at the end of this world. How then are they willed to behold that glory before it come? I anſwer that the words may be tranſlated more rightly, thus, *in the day of his betrothing*: but if we will take it as it is tranſlated, *in the day of his mariage*, ye muſt know, that faith beholdeth thinges inuiſible, and thinges to come. And touching this queſtion, who is that his mother that dooth crowne him? Or let it bee that the mother of king Salomon did in the day that hee was betrothed, or when the mariage day was, ſet a crowne vpon his head, yet this we know, that it is *God that crowneth Ieſus with honour and glorie*, as we reade Pſalme 8. and Heb. 2.9. It is moſt trne that God hath aduaunced Ieſus Chriſt, and ſet the crowne of glorie vpon him: that is out of controuerſie, & yet withall his mother doth alſo after a ſort ſet the crown of glorie vpon his head. *Seeing the Church is the fulnes of him that filleth all in all*, Ephe. 1. veſe 23. The Church doth honour and glorifie Chriſt, and the Church ſometimes is ſet forth to be the mother of Chriſt, Reu. 12. But to let paſſe theſe things, let vs conſider that which is the chiefe and principall matter in this ſentence, how wee are called vpon to come forth, and to behold this glorie of Chriſt. For all

the faithfnl ſoules, be the daughters of Zion. And looke how the daughters of Ieruſalem, ſitting or remaining in their houſes, in their chambers and cloſets, could not beholde the glorie of king Salomon, and therefore they bee willed to come forth of their dores: euen ſo, if wee will beholde the great king in his moſt excellent glorie, wee muſt come out of our dores, wee muſt come out of our ſelues, otherwiſe wee cannot ſee his glory. We are in our ſelues ſhut vp in a darke dungeon, we are called vpon to come forth into the cleare light of faith, and to remoue away thoſe thicke walles of the fleſh, which are betweene our ſight and Chriſt. Moſt true it is, that whoſoeuer doo not come foorth of themſelues, but will ſeeke Chriſt in their own reaſon, and carnall imaginations, they cannot beholde his glorie. This is a matter of great importance, and by no meanes to bee neglected: for if you haue a deſire to bee drawne out of this vaine world, in our affections and deſires, then are we to goe forth, and to beholde the glorie of Chriſt: for what can moue or drawe vs more then this, when we behold the greatnes of his glorie, and conſider withall, that he is crowned therewith, euen to this ende, that we may be partakers with him in the ſame. You ſee then, that it is vnto ſpeciall purpoſe, that we are called vpon to come foorth, and with the eies of faith to behold in dayly meditation, the glorie of Chriſte Ieſus, in which his Church ſhall

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raigne with him. If we doo this, we ſhall eaſily deſpiſe all the glorie and pleaſures of this world, as droſſe. Our Lorde worke it in vs: Amen.

THE SEVENTH SERMON.

Chap. IIII.

1 *Behold thou art faire my loue, behold thou art fair, thine eyes are as the doues: among thy locks, thine haire is like the flocke of goates, which looke down from the mountaine of Gilead.*

2 *Thy teeth are like a flocke of ſheepe in good order, which goe vppe from the waſhing, which euerie one bring out twinnes, and none is barren among them.*

3 *Thy lippes are like a threed of skarlet, and thy talk is comelie, thy temples are within thy locks, as a peece of a Pomegranate.*

4 *Thy necke is as the tower of Dauid, built for defence, a thouſand ſhields hang therein, euen all the targets of the mightie men.*

5 *The two breaſts are as two yong roes that are twins, feeding among the lillies.*

6 *Vntill the daye breake and the ſhadowes flie a-*

way, I will goe to the mountain of Myrrhe, and to the mountaine of Incenſe.

7 *Thou art all fayre my loue, and there is no ſpot in thee.*

8 *Come with mee from Lebanon my ſpouſe, euen with mee from Lebanon, looke from the toppe of Amanah, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the dens of the Lyons, and from the mountains of the Leopardes.*

His Chapter, euen all the whole, except two verſes, the 15. and 16. is the ſpeech of the Bridegrome, conſiſting in prayſes and commendations of the Bride, in declaration of his loue towards her, and in promiſes made vnto her. Theſe three things be exceeding comfortable, and may indeed, if we bee not too too dull, euen glad our heartes. For conſider that he is the king of glory and who is able to ſet forth the excellency of his beautie? Shall it not then ſeeme a great thing vnto vs, that he being in the very top and height of al glory, doth ſo admire the beauty of the church & is ſo greatly delighted with it, & promiſeth to take her into his preſence? This will appear more in the particulars: thus hee beginneth to praiſe her beautie, *Behold thou art faire my loue, beholde thou art faire.* This is a generall commendation,

and

and that which followeth, is a praiſe by ſeuerall and particular parts. How great and excellent the beauty is of the whole Church, and ſo of euery faithfull ſoule, doth appeare by this, that he doth as it were wonder thereat, and repeateth and doubleth his ſpeech, *Beholde thou art fayre my loue, behold thou art fayre.* For when the ſcripture ſayth, *behold*, it noteth for the moſt part a thing to be wondred at, and the doubling of the ſpeech doth augment the matter. But here lieth the chiefe thing to be conſidered, that ſuch a one as our Lord Ieſus doth wonder at her beautie. Such as be brought vp in a poor, baſe, and beggarlie condition, if they chance to ſee one in goodlie rich attire, doo wonder thereat. But let the ſame perſon ſo richly decked, come into the preſence of a glorious Emperour, and hee doth not wonder, vnles indeed the decking bee exceeding great. The poore and of meane eſtate may wonder at a little, but hee cannot. Euen ſo may you conſider it in our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, for he dwelleth in glorie and beautie vnſpeakeable, and yet as it were, wondreth at the beautie of his Spouſe, which is a full declaration, that her beautie excelleth. What ſhoulde more inflame our hearts vnto vertue and true godlines, then this, that it maketh men ſo faire and precious in the eyes of the Lord? But whencè hath the ſpouſe this beautie? I need not ſtande to ſhew againe, that he of one that was fowle, ſtincking and de-

formed, hath made her cleane, ſweete, and beautifull: for all her beautie is from him. It will further be obiected, that this is ſpoken of the church militant vpon earth, in which euen the perfecteſt haue great deformities, how then can he ſay, *Behold thou art fayre my loue, beholde thou art fayre?* I anſwere that the Lord beholdeth his ſpouſe, not in herſelfe, but in himſelfe, that is waſhed, iuſtified, ſanctified, decked and cloathed with his graces. Thus much touching the generall commendation: now to that which is by the particular parts, firſt, wee are to remember that all the true belieuers are knit together by one ſpirite, and doo make one miſticall bodie in Chriſt Ieſus, 1. Cor. 12. verſ. 13. So then as there be in the naturall bodie of a man, diuerſe members, which according to their ſeueral gifts haue diuerſe functions and operations, the holy Ghoſt aſcribeth the like to the miſticall bodie, as S. Paule ſetteth forth at large, 1. Cor. 12. Then further we are to obſerue, that thoſe are of right ſingular beautie which are beautifull and comely in all partes. If one part be comely, and an other deformed, then there is not perfect beautie. But the Church iuſtified and ſanctified in Chriſt, is glorious in all parts. Our Sauiour here doth begin with the eyes ſaying: *thine eyes are as the doues*: as much as to ſay, thine eyes are like to the eyes of the doues: of all partes in the humaine bodie, if the face be not comelie, beautifull, and well fauoured, there is little

little or no reckoning made. And of all partes in the face, the eyes are a principal ornament if they bee beautifull, and a chiefe deformitie to the whole if they bee not. Now the eyes of the Church are here commended, by comparing them to the eyes of the doues, which are chaſte, ſimple, and verie beautifull to looke vpon. What ſhall wee take theſe eyes to bee? It ſhould ſeeme by Saint Paule, 1. Cor. 12. that the paſtors and teachers are the eyes in the Church, for they are to giue light to the whole bodie, through the heauenly and pure doctrine, and ſo it may be taken here: but I take it rather in this place, that the eyes are true and liuely faith in all the godlie: for by faith we looke vp to the Lord, and beholde things inuiſible. Doubtles this eye of faith is ſimple, it is chaſte, it is verie beautifull and precious in Gods ſight. *Without faith it is vnpoſſible to pleaſe God*, as it is written, Heb. 11. ver. 6. Let vs ſtudie and labour then, by all poſſible meanes to get this precious iewell, and euen to be rich in it. Would you not bee glad to caſt vp ſuch an eye to the Lord, as he may bee delighted with all, as with an eye that is ſimple, chaſte, and beautifull.

The next clauſe is in theſe wordes, *among thy lockes*, which is expouunded diuerſly. For ſome do take it to ſignifie that the locks of hayre hang downe, ſo as the eyes doe appeare from within them. And other are of this minde, that he ſaith,

beſide

beſide thy lockes, or as it were thy lockes remoued. Howſoeuer it is, this is moſt certaine, that according to the manner of the attire which the chaſt virgins did vſe about their hayre for modeſtie and comelines, the bride is here commended. Then he addeth, *thy haire is like a flocke of goates which looke downe from mount Gilead*. It is taken, that by the haire, are meante the multitude of the faithfull, eſpecially when they bee aſſembled to heare the word, and other holy exerciſes of religion. And it is fitlie reſembled by a flocke of goates, feeding vppon mount Gilead. That mountaine was fruitfull with holeſome paſture, and a goodlie ſight it was to behold a flock of goates ſpread all abroad, and feeding thereupon. Where the Lordes people are aſſembled and are fed with the heauenly foode, it is in his eyes a goodly and a comely thing: alſo happie are they who with the choſen doe aſſemble vpon his holy mountaine, and there taſte of the ſpirituall foode to the ſatisfying of their ſoules.

In the next place, he commendeth the teeth, ſaying, *Thy teeth are like a flocke of ſheepe in good order*, or rather, which are equall, *which goe vppe from the waſhing, which euerie one bring out twinnes, and none is barren among them*. Touching the teeth in the naturall bodie, the comelines and beautie of them is in theſe three thinges, firſt that they be euen or of equall length and bignes: ſecondly, that they be white and cleane: thirdly

that

that each row anſwere fitlie to the other, & none be wanting. To ſet forth theſe thinges, they bee likened to a flocke of ſheep, which bee of equall ſtature, or of an euen bignes, that is for the firſt. Then that they come vppe from the waſhing, ſo that being euen newly waſhed, they bee white and cleane, that is the ſecond. In the laſt place as twinnes are anſwerable one to the other, ſo in the two rowes euery tooth meeteth fit with another, and ſo there is no gappe, there is none wanting. Now it may bee demaunded, what are the teeth of the holy Church? To anſwere this, wee muſt conſider that the Lorde giueth a ſpirituall foode to his Church, which euery faithfull ſoule feedeth vpon. This foode is the Lord Ieſus himſelfe? *hee is the bread of life that came downe from heauen.* Iohn 6. And becauſe hee is fedde vppon through faith, *and faith commeth by hearing of the word.* Rom 10. The holy word of God is alſo called the foode of our ſoules, for Saint Peter calleth it the *ſincere milke which hee willeth us to couet as new borne babes, that wee may grow thereby,* 1. Pet. 2. verſ. 1. And S. Paule telleth the Corinths, *that they were carnall, euen babes in Chriſt, and that he gaue them milke to drink, and not ſtrong meate.* 1. Cor. 3. Where wee may ſee that the worde of God, for the diuerſe maner of the deliuering of it, is milke, and it is ſtrong meate. Hereupon the teachers are called paſtors, that is to ſay, feeders of the flockes. Now by the teeth

of

of the Church, we may very wel vnderſtand thoſe graces, which are giuen vnto euery faithful ſoule, by which the ſoule hath power to feede vpon the word, and vpon Chriſt. Or by the teeth may well bee vnderſtood the godly and faithfull paſtors, who as S. Paul ſpeaketh, *doe cut and deuide the word of truth aright vnto the people.*

It followeth: *Thy lips are like a threed of skarlet.* Here are two things commended in the lips, as that they be ſmall, which is reſembled by a thred, and that they be of red colour, & therfore he mentioneth skarlet. And if a virgin be neuer ſo beautifull, if her ſpeech bee rude and vnpleaſant, it diſgraceth all: therefore he addeth, *thy ſpeech is comely.* The ſpeech of man declareth what is in the heart: for our Sauiour ſaieth, *Out of the aboundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.* And a good man out of the gond treaſure of his heart bringeth forth good thinges: and an euill man out of the euill treaſure of his hart bringeth forth euill things. By nature there is nothing in mans heart but that which is corrupt and abhominable, and ſo in all men, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *the poyſon of Aſpes is vnder their lips.* Rom. 3. But by the operation of the holy ſpirit, the harts of the faithfull are repleniſhed with faith, with loue, with zeale, and with many goodlie vertues, and then the ſpeech is according. Wherefore hee ſaith, *thy ſpeech is comely.* Let men conſider this well: for many men make ſmall reckoning of ſpeech.

ſpeech. Words ſay they (when they vtter all the vanitie and filthines of their mind) are no harme. Tel them that men ſhall giue an accounte at the day of iudgement for euery idle word, and they will ieſtingly anſwer, that God hath greater matters to looke after, then to take account of idle words. Let theſe alone in their filthines, it behoueth euery one that will bee acceptable vnto Chriſt, and beautifull in his eyes to haue comely ſpeech. Then he addeth, *Thy temples are within thy lockes as a peece of pomegranate*. This is to bee vnderſtoode both of the temples and of the cheekes, and their beautie is commended, that together with the fayre white, there is a mixture of red. That he ſayth, *within thy lockes* it is the ſame word which he vſeth before about rhe eyes. And as I noted it is taken diuerſly. Eyther that the lockss did hang vpon the temples, and ſo to take it that they bee within the lockes, or from within the lockes, that is, the lockes being remoued. Howſoeuer it is, as I ſaide before, this is certaine that the modeſty, the chaſt and comly maner of wearing of lockes is here commended.

In the next place, hee commeth to the necke, ſaying, *Thy necke is like to the tower of Dauid, built for a defence, a thouſande ſhieldes hang therein, euen all the targettes of the mightie men.* It dooth appeare plainly by this place, that king Dauid built a tower in Ieruſalem for an armorie: it is tranſlated in our engliſh, for defence: but the worde doth

doth ſignifie, for the hanging vp of ſharpe weapons, or weapons that had edge. And therfore is moſt fitly to bee called an Armorie. Alſo that which followeth, maketh the matter cleare, that he ſaith, *a thouſand ſhields hang therein, euen all the targettes of the mightie men.* Then in this tower were laide vp the chiefe weapons of warre, vntill ſuch time as there ſhould bee vſe for them. Vnto this tower dooth the Lorde compare the necke of his church. It is long, ſtraight, and furniſhed with goodly thinges. To applie this vnto ſome ſeuerall perſons or functions in the church, I will not curiouſly ſtand: but beſides the beautie and ſtatelie comelines, I take it here is meante the force and power of the whole armour of God, which the holy Apoſtle ſetteth forth, Ephe. 6. which indeed the Lord doth arme al the faithfull withall, that they may be able to ſtand aginſt all the aſſaults of the Diuel. The ſhields & targets of the valiant men of Iſraell were in the tower of Dauid: but in the church is the armour and power of the mightie God.

Now to the breaſtes: *Thy two breaſts* (ſaieth he) *are as two yong roes that are twinnes, feeding among the lillies.* The breaſtes in a woman are for to nouriſh the infants which ſhe bringeth forth. And the Church is the mother of all Gods children, when they be regenerate, ſhe dooth nurſe them vp, and for that cauſe there are two breaſts aſcribed vnto her. Moſt certaine it is, that whoſoeuer

ſoeuer will grow vp in the Lord, hee muſt ſucke his ſpirituall nouriſhment from theſe breaſtes. They bee here highly commended, as to bee like vnto two young roes that be twinnes. They bee like one another, they be full of very ſweet nouriſhment, as roes that feede in a pleaſant paſture. Theſe breaſts of the Church are ſaid by interpretors, to bethe two Teſtaments of the Lord, the olde and the new. And very agreeable to truth it is ſo to take them, ſeeing the Church doth not bring forth any children to God, nor nouriſh thē with her owne doctrine, but with the moſt ſweet and holeſome doctrine of the Lorde. The two Teſtaments indeede, the olde and the new, maye very well be compared vnto twinnes, they agree they both ſet foorth one heauenly doctrine, the one confirmeth the other. If anie man will obiect and ſay, theſe doe containe the counſel and will of God, it is onely the doctrine of the Lord which they ſet foorth, how then can they be called the breaſtes of the Church? I anſwere, that the like may be obiected touching any one thing which is prayſed in her: for all that is beautifull & excellent in her, is of grace, & freely beſtowed vpon her by Chriſt. Al the holy books then of the olde Teſtament and of the newe, euen the writinges of the Prophets and Apoſtles, are the two breaſts of the Church: and from them onelie we muſt ſuck the ſincere milke of the word by which we are to grow. Thus farre the Lord hath commended

mended his Spouſe by ſeuerall partes, not proſecuting euery particular, but adding in the next verſe ſauing one, that *ſhe is vll faire and no ſpot in her*, which wee will handle, when wee come vnto it. Now to that which followeth next: *Vntill the daye breake, and the ſhadowes flie away, I will goe to the mountaine of Myrrhe, and to the mountaine of incenſe.* We haue in the end of the ſecond Chapter ſhewed what day it is which is ſpoken of, when he ſaith, *vntill the day breake*: for there the Spouſe did intreat her welbeloued, that vntill the day breake, and the ſhadowes flie away, hee would returne and bee like a young roe vpon the mountaines of Bether. And here the Bridegrome ſeemeth to anſwer vnto her requeſt. It may bee referred (as I ſaide) to the time of Chriſtes comming in the fleſh, when as indeede all the ſhadowes of the law did vaniſh and flie away, but more fitly to the great day of the generall iudgement, when as indeede all the ſhadowes, euen all errors, and all calamities ſhall vtterlie vaniſh for euer, and the Church ſhall liue in glorious light, world without end. Now that he ſaith, he will vntill that day goe to the mountaine of myrrhe, and to the mountain of incenſe, it may be taken two wayes. Firſt the heauens are the holy mountaine of the Lorde, and there the praiſe and honour which the bleſſed Angels and ſpirites of the iuſt, doo glorifie him withall, is as ſweete incenſe and precious myrrhe. So that the

heauens

heauens may very well bee called the mountaine of myrrhe, and the mountaine of incenſe. If wee take it ſo, then it reſpecteth his aſcending into the heauens (as he tolde his diſciples) to prepare a place, where hee muſt (as S. Peter ſheweth) remain vntill the time of the reſtoring of all things. And then will hee come downe to fetch all his choſen, that where hee is, there alſo may they be. Then the ſecond way is, that the mountaine of myrrhe, &c. may bee taken for the Church militant vpon earth, which is often called the mountaine of the Lord. And very well it may bee called the mountaine of myrrhe, and the mountain of incenſe, becauſe there bee the ſweete prayers and prayſes of God offered vp, through the mediation of Ieſus Chriſt. And of this mountaine he ſayeth, *Behold I am with you vnto the ende of the world.* Matth. 28. For albeit our Lord is in the heauens, yet is he preſent with his Church vpon earth highly eſteeming the faithfull and ſincere worſhip and ſeruice of his people. For this cauſe he appeared in viſion to S. Iohn, Reuel. 1. in the middeſt of the ſeauen golden Candleſtickes, holding the ſeauen ſtarres in his right hand. The Church of Rome, as if he were abſent, hath ſet vp one to be his vicar, to execute his office, euen to giue remiſſion of ſins, & life euerlaſting vnto all men. This is Antichriſt that taketh vpon him to bee in Chriſtes ſtead. But the godlie doe by faith finde and feele the preſence of the Lorde, they

dwell in him and hee in them, they need not, hauing the fountaine it ſelfe of liuing waters, ſeeke to thoſe ſtinking puddles.

It followeth, *Thou art all faire my loue, & there is no ſpot in thee*, Here is a very great praiſe giuen to the Bride, that her beautie is abſolute & perfect throughout all parts of her, and that there is no ſpot or blemiſh at all. From hence, as it ſeemeth, S. Paul draweth his ſpeech, when he ſayeth that *Chriſte gaue himſelfe for his Church, that hee might ſanctifie it, and clenſe it by the waſhing of water through the worde. That hee might make it vnto himſelfe a glorious* Church, *not hauing ſpotte or wrinckle, or anie ſuch thing: but that it ſhould bee holy and without blame.* Epheſ. 5. verſe 25. 26. 27. How ſhall the Church make any doubt but that ſhee is loued of God, when ſhee is become thus glorious and pure, as not to haue in anie parte ſo much as the leaſt ſpot or wrinkle of deformitie? For that one word (*mum*) which the bridgrome here vſeth in the Hebrew text, which is vſuallie expounded, *a ſpot*, S. Paule expreſſeth by all theſe, ſpot, wrinkle, or any ſuch thinges Then wee ſee that although the Bridegrome did not goe through all particular parts of his ſpouſe, to giue them their ſeuerall commendation, as he did in diuers, yet he aſcribeth a full perfection of beautie vnto them all, when he ſayeth, *Thou art al faire my loue, and there's no ſpotte in thee.* Such a glorious miſticall bodie is meete to bee ioyned with

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ſo glorious a head : and if there were any deformitie remaining, how could it bee vnited vnto him? But here it will bee ſaide, how agreeth this with her owne ſpeech in the firſt Chapter, where ſhe ſayeth, *I am blacke but yet comely, and that ſhe is ſunne-burnt?* And how doth it agree with all thoſe places of holie Scripture which teſtifie ſo plainely, that all the faithfull while they liue here be full of ſpottes and deformities ? I haue aunſwered this before, namely, that men muſt not conſider or eſteeme the Church, as ſhee is in her ſelfe, or as ſhe is here in the world : but wee muſt behold her in Chriſt, iuſtified and fully ſanctified in him, and as ſhe ſhall bee at the day of mariage, when her whole trimming and decking ſhall bee put on. And therefore thoſe Heretikes and Schiſmatikes, which from theſe places haue drawne their ſtrong imagination, touching the full puritie of the church, while ſhe is vpon earth, and ſo haue condemned the true Church for her imperfections and ſinnes, are much deceyued. It may be ſaid then, why doth not the Lord then rather ſay to his ſpouſe, thou ſhalt be al faire my loue, and there ſhall be no ſpot in thee? I anſwere, that the ſcripture for the certainty of things to come, ſpeaketh of them as if they were preſent: becauſe God is vnchangeable in al his decrees, and none can hinder his worke.

Now remaineth the laſt verſe of that which I did reade: *Come with me from Lebanon my ſpouſe*

came with mee from Lebanon, &c. This may bee expounded two waies, eyther that the Lord doth promise to shew to his Spouse the land of promise, or that he promiseth to draw her to himself out of all places of the world. If wee take it in the former sense, that wee are to remember that the land of Canaan promised to Abraham and his seede, was a figure of the heauenlie inheritance: then when the sight of this is promised, or the viewing of it from the toppe of those hils, we are to bee lifted vp to the consideration of an higher matter, namely, to the beholding of that glorious inheritance, which shall last for euer. For by faith the godlie doe behold the land of promise, euen the land of the liuing, which the Lorde in great kindnesse did shew vnto them. If wee take it in the other sense (which I suppose is the right) thē the promise is this, that howsoeuer his spouse is scattered and dispersed among the nations of the world, he will take her vnto him. You knowe it is set downe that the Lord will gather his elect from the foure windes, and from the vttermost parts of the earth. And it is to bee marked that he saith, from the dens of the lyons, and from the mountaines of the leopardes. For the church dwelleth here in the world among cruell and sauage beastes, which woulde vtterly deuoure her: but the Lord doth miraculously keepe her, and sayeth, shee shall come with him from among them. *The Lorde draweth his out of great tribulation,*

lation, as the Elder telleth Iohn, Reuel. 7. verse 14. And as Saint Paul sayeth, *Through many troubles We must enter into the kingdome of heauen.* Let vs not then faint.

THE EIGHT SERMON.

Chap. IIII.

9 *My sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thine eyes, & with a chaine of thy necke.*

10 *My sister, my spouse, how faire is thy loue, how much better is thy loue then wine? and the sauour of thine ointments then all spices?*

11 *Thy lips, my spouse, drop as honey combes, honey and milke are vnder thy tongue, and the sauour of thy garmentes, is as the sauour of Lebanon.*

12 *My sister my spouse, is as a garden inclosed, as a spring shut vp, and a fountaine sealed vppe.*

13 *Thy plants are as an orchyard of pomegranates, with sweete fruites, as Camphire, Spikenarde.*

14 *Euen Spikenarde and Saffron, Calamus & Cinamon, with all the trees of incense, myrrhe and aloes, with all the chiefe spices.*

15 *O fountaine of the gardens, O well of liuing waters, and the springes of Lebanon.*

16 *Ariſe O North, and come O South, and blow on my Garden, that the ſpices therof may flow out: let my welbeloued come to his garden, and eate his pleaant fruite.*

17 *I am come to my garden, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe: I gathered my Myrrhe with my ſpice, I eate mine honey combe with mine honey, I dranke my wine with my milke: eate O friendes, drinke and make you merie O welbeloued.*

THe holy bridegrome proceedeth in commending of his bride with rare and ſingular commendations, as wee ſhall beſt ſee in the particulars. And firſt hee commendeth her beautie and decking to bee ſuch, that it hath (as our engliſh tranſlation ſaith) wounded his heart. Which he alſo repeateth for vehemencie. If we follow this tranſlation, then wee muſt vnderſtand that his heart is wounded with loue: which is a very vehement ſpeech, and doth indeed fitly expreſſe the ſenſe of this place, for it is his purpoſe to expreſſe an exceeding loue. But the ſame ſenſe remaining we may ſay, thou haſt pluckt away mine heart my ſiſter, my ſpouſe, thou haſt pluckt away mine hart with one of thine eyes, &c. For it doth wonderfullie ſet foorth the paſſion of loue, when a Bridegrome ſhall tell his bride, that ſhe ſhath his heart

heart, or that ſhee hath gotten his heart. Hereby appeareth the ſuperabounding loue of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt towards his Church: if that there be not any wordes ſufficient fullie to expreſſe the ſame. And here wee may ſee againe what a glorie there is in the ſimple & chaſt, and beautifull eye of faith: as alſo in thoſe graces and ſpirituall ornaments, which are the fruits thereof, which are meant by a chaine of her necke. O that we could throughlie conſider of this, that with a burning zeale, our harts might alwaies be enflamed to ſeeke increaſe of the cleere ſight of this pure eye. I might ſtand to rehearſe many places of the holy ſcriptures, which do commend faith: but none beyond this, that Chriſt ſaith, that his ſpouſe hath pluckt away his hearte, or that ſhee hath gotten his heart, with one of her eyes: O how doth the Lord delight in faith? If faith bee one of her eyes (may ſome man ſay) which is the other? I aunſwere, that becauſe the Church is brought in vnder the perſon of a woman, there be two eyes aſcribed vnto her, but withall wee muſt know that faith is the one and the other. The holy Ghoſt ſayeth: *That the goſpell is the power of God to ſaluation, vnto euerie one that belieueth to the Iewe firſt and then to the Grecian*, adding this reaſon, *that the righteouſnes of God is reuealed in it from faith to faith*, Rom. 1. 17. 18. ſpeaking as if there were a double faith, when as indeede there is but one faith, but the ſame weaker and ſtronger. And

ſo in regarde of the ſame increaſe of the liuelie faith, it may be called two eyes, as that place ſaith from faith to faith. In the next place hee ſheweth how delightſome and pleaſant her loue is vnto him: he doth expreſſe it by the way of admiration and wonderment, ſaying, *How fayre is thy loue, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe? How much better is thy loue then wine?* It is out of al doubt, that all good thinges come vnto vs, and vppon vs, from the loue of Chriſt, but contrariwiſe our loue towards him can adde nothing vnto his fulnes, and therefore poore ſoules, euen ſimple creatures here vpon the earth that doe loue him, haue theſe temptations euery one of them at one time or other: I loue Chriſt Ieſus from the very bottome of mine heart, but what regard can he haue of the loue of ſuch a poore ſillie wretch as I am? What can my loue bee in his eyes? I feele indeed that I loue him with a loue vnfained. Behold here beloued, vnto your comfort, what hee pronounceth of the loue, wherewith euerie faithfull ſoule doth loue him. How faire is thy loue my ſiſter, my ſpouſe? How much better is thy loue then wine? It hath beene noted in the firſt Chapter, that wine is put for all daintie thinges in a banquet, whereby it is manifeſt, that the loue wherewith wee loue the Lorde Ieſus, is maruailous accepted vnto him. Let vs come to this, to be ſure that wee loue him, (not after our owne fantaſies) but with the true ſpirituall loue, and then whatſoeuer temptation

ariſeth to diſcourage vs, let vs be out of doubt that our loue is precious, delightſome and acceptable vnto him. O will ſome man ſay, how ſhall I knowe that I loue the Lord Ieſus Chriſt with this ſincere loue, which he ſaith here is ſo beautifull in his eyes, and ſo much better then wine? I would faine loue him. I anſwere, thou knoweſt what is written. *If ye loue me, keepe my commaundementes.* Yea there ariſeth all the doubt, for who is it that doth not dayly tranſgreſſe the holy commandements of God? We muſt therefore looke to this, how wee can ſay with S. Paule, Rom. 7. *I delight in the law of God touching the inner man.* If we loue the truth, if we loue holineſſe, righteouſnes, and puritie. And if our ſoule doe loath and abhorre that which is vnpure and vncleane, though it ſticke ſo faſt in vs, that wee cannot wholly caſt it off: let vs bee out of all doubt, that we loue the Lord. O happie and bleſſed then are we, our loue cannot be lightly eſteemed in his eyes. In deede ſuch as doo perſwade themſelues that they do loue the Lord, and doo not in the zeale of puritie, loath and deteſt iniquitie from the bottome of their hearts, but can take pleaſure therein, are vtterly deceiued. You know that Saint Iohn caſteth ſuch downe as liars, that ſay: *They loue God and keepe not his commaundementes. The ſauour of her oyntments*, which he ſaith, *is better then the ſauour of all ſweet ſpices*, is to be vnderſtood of thoſe heauenly giftes and

graces

graces of the holy Ghoſt, which are beſtowed vpon the faithfull, and for which they bee called Chriſtians. There bee in deede very many which profeſſe in worde that they bee Chriſtians: but they know not what it is to bee a true Chriſtian. For where is the ſweet ſauour of their ointments? What graces of the holy Ghoſt doo appeare in them? Nay, in ſtead of theſe, they doo in all places where they doo become, caſt forth a loathſome ſtinke of their filthie wordes and wicked deedes. O beloued, let no man ſeduce and deceiue you. You haue many now a daies which are come to this depth of impietie, that whoſoeuer will not ioyne with them, to ſtinke in filthines, they by & by, in reproach terme them puritanes. This blaſphemie the Lord God will powre forth his vengeance vpon one day, although his long ſuffering bee ſuch, that hee ſeemeth not to regarde it. But as it is written: *He that is filthie, let him be filthie ſtill*: let them paſſe, that we may returne againe to the commendation of the bride.

Thy lippes (ſaith hee) *my ſpouſe, droppe as honey combes, honey and milke are vnder thy tongue, and the ſauour of thy garmentes, is as the ſauour of Lebanon.* Here are in this verſe two thinges highly praiſed, her ſpeech, & her ſweet ſauour. The former of theſe, euen her ſpeech, is compared to the dropping of the honey combes: as the ſweete drops of hony that diſtil from the honey combs, ſo bee the wordes which come from her mouth:

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for he ſaith, *Thy lippes drop as the honey combes*. And further, her ſpeech is not onely moſt ſweete, but holſome and nouriſhing: which is expreſſed in theſe wordes: *Honey and milke are vnder thy tongue*: honey and milke are for nouriſhment. Theſe are excellent commendations, in which we may note, what an alteration is wrought in the regenerate, and how far they are changed from that which they were in thēſelues by nature. Our Sauiour ſaith in the goſpell, (as you know) *That out of the aboundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh*. A good man, out of the good treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth good thinges: and an euill man, out of the euill treaſure of his hart, bringeth forth euill thinges: the tongue vttereth but that which is within. And what that is in the vnregenerate or natural man, heare what S. Paul alleageth: *Their throate is an open ſepulcher, With their tongues they haue deciued: the poyſon of Aſpes is vnder their lippes; whoſe mouth is full of curſing and bitternes?* Rom. 3. 13. 14. Is not here a great difference? For curſing and bitternes, whereof the mouth was full, the lips now drop as the honey combes. In ſtead of the poyſon of Aſpes, vnder their lips, honey & milke are vnder their tongue. Is not here I ſay, a wonderfull alteration? For are not they which are regenerate and ſanctified in Chriſt Ieſus, much altered from that they were of themſelues? When as for curſing and bitternes, and for the poyſon of Aſpes, their lips doo drop

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as the honie combes, and honey and milke are vnder their tongue? Let vs consider of it yet more particularlie. A naturall man hath nothing in him but meere rebellion against God: his hart is euill, stuffed full of bitter enmitie and hatred both of God and man. His words doo dishonor and blaspheme God, and they hurt and destroy men: on the other side, a man led and guided by the good spirit of the Lord, hath in him the loue of God, and the loue of men. Pure wordes doe flow from him, he confesseth the truth, the law of grace is vnder his tongue, hee vttereth the praise and glorie of God, he doth instruct and edifie men: euerie way his wordes are sweet, yea they bee most holesome and nourishing, they be (as it is here said) honey and milke. Where shall we finde these lippes which droppe as the honey combes? Where be those tongues vnder which there is honey and milke? What neede that question will some say? They be the lips and tongue of the Church, the lips and tongue of Christians. Go among them and see if their lippes doe not drop as the honey combes. If we should againe demaund, whither shall we go to seeke out those Christians, whose speech is so sweete and so holsome? Some man will say they be euerie where, I hope we be all Christians, God forbid else, say they? Then shall we finde that euerie where mens lips doo drop as the honey combes, and that honey and milke is vnder their tongue. What are

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then theſe ſweete and holſome wordes, euery where to be heard? Are they not the ſmoothe flattering and diſſembling ſpeeches, which many doo vſe? Are they not the lies and ſlanders of the multitude? Or be they not the bitter reproches, curſes, tauntes and reuilinges, which ouerflow in all places? Or the vaine babling, gibing and ieſting mixed with baudie wordes? Theſe bee the things which the lips of thouſand thouſands do drop, and a man ſhall finde almoſt nothing elſe in all places, euen among thoſe which profeſſe themſelues to be Chriſtians and to be of the true Church. O Lord, if this be the true Church which Chriſt doth here deſcribe (as it cannot bee denied) where ſhal we find her? Surely, they be but euen a few among the multitude, euen ſcattered here and there, whoſe lips droppe as the honey combes, vnder whoſe tongue is honie and milke: *Whoſe ſpeech* (as S. Paule willeth it ſhould bee) *is alwaies gracious, powdred with ſalte, to know how to aunſwere euery man*, Coloſſ. 4. 6. *Euen ſuch as may miniſter grace to the hearers*. Epheſ. 4. 29. O let vs not then deceiue our ſelues brethren: If our talke bee vaine and filthie, are we the true Children of the Church? Shall it then be ſaid of vs, thy lips drop as the honie combes, honey and milke are vnder thy tongue, ſeeke to haue cleane hearts, that your words may bee ſweete? In the next words hee commendeth her good ſauour, ſaying: *The ſauour of thy garmentes is as the ſa-*

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nour of Lebanon. Lebanon was a place in which there did grow ſuch ſweet thinges, as caſt forth a delightſome ſauour. The bride is perfumed with ſuch graces, that all her garments doe ſmel ſweet. This is not meant of the bodily cloathing: for many of the Saints haue liued in pouerty, clothed in ſimple apparrell, yea euen in ſtinking priſons and dungeons. But it is to bee vnderſtood of the ſpirituall clothing, where the filthie ragges of the old man are put off, and the new man is put on, *which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.* Coloſſ. 3. verſe, 9. 10. This is the clothing of which it is ſaid, *Thou haſt a fewe names in Sardi, which haue not defiled their garmentes: and they ſhall walke with mee in white, for they are worthie.* Reuel. 3. 4. He was caſt forth from the marriage that wanted the wedding garment. Matth. 22. For let a man neuer ſo impudently thruſt in himſelf in his ſtinking clothes, to be as one of the Church, yet he ſhall be thruſt out: for the garmentes of the bride are ſweete, euen as the ſauour of Lebanon. All at this wedding haue their garmentes verie ſweete. Thus haue we ſeene very great commendations of the Church: but yet here are further: for it followeth, *My ſiſter, my ſpouſe, is as a garden encloſed, as a ſpring ſhutte vp, and a fountaine ſealed vp.* Here bee two ſimilitudes that doe ſet foorth her praiſe. The one is of a garden that is incloſed: the other of a ſpring or fountaine ſhut vp and ſealed.

led. This incloſure, this ſhutting vp and ſealing, is firſt to commend the chaſtity of the Church, that with a firme faithfulnes keepeth her ſelfe only to Chriſt. There is no entrance for any beſides him. She loueth, ſhe obeyeth and worſhippeth him, and vnto him ſhe reſerueth all her fruites. Shee doth not worſhip ſtrange Gods, ſhe runneth not a whoring after Idols, ſhe is encloſed and ſealed vp only vnto her welbeloued. Here is (I ſay) the chaſtitie of the bride. Then ſecondly it ſheweth, that none other are pertakers with her in thoſe heauenly treaſures, which ſhe receiueth through Chriſt. There bee many in the viſible Church which ſeeme to bee partakers, and make a great ſhew: but the truth is, none are bleſſed, but onely the elect.

Then further we muſt obſerue, that heere are ioyned together a garden full of ſweete plantes, and a ſpring and fountaine of liuing waters. If the beds and plantes in a garden be not watered, there can nothing grow, but all will wither and be fruitleſſe. This garden therefore is well watered: there is in it a ſpring of liuing waters which alwaies do flow, wherewith euery plant and precious herbe is watered. Theſe waters albeit they abound, yet doe they not flow foorth of the garden, they bee ſhut vp and ſealed, none other garden or plantes are watered by them. What bee theſe waters? Euen the holy and pure worde of the Lord: the holeſome doctrine of the Scriptures.

tures. With this are all the ſweete plantes of the Lords garden watred, according to the ſaying of S. Paule, *I haue planted, Apollos hath watered.* 1. Cor. 3. verſ. 6. Wherewith did Paule plant, or wherewith did Apollos water, but with the liuely worde of the Lorde? Or wherewith ſhall any plant grow vp to bring forth fruit vnto the Lord, but with the ſame word? You haue many indeed that regard not this, which yet take themſelues to be good plants: but they be vtterly deceiued, they be but baſtard ſtocks that bring forth ſowre and bitter fruites. For if they wil grow and bring forth good fruite indeede, they muſt be continually watered with this fountaine: they muſt receiue in the holſome worde of God into their heartes and ſoules. Now ſome man may here obiect, that the doctrine of Gods worde doth flow forth vnto all, it is not as a fountaine ſealed vp. Do not many reade it, heare it preached, & profeſſe it, which yet are not ſaued? I anſwere, that indeede after a ſorte the worde of the Lord doth flow forth ouer multitudes, which are not the true Plantes of the Lord, but ſhall be plucked vp: but it doeth not water them, they haue not the liuely and effectuall working of it to make them grow and beare good fruite. They haue (at the leaſt ſome of them) a taſte thereof: but as water that falleth vpon a rocke doth onely wet the outſide, and not ſoften the rocke or the ſtone within: ſo their hearts remaine ſtill hard as flint, and

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it doth not water them. This is it then, the word of God is common vnto manie: but touching the liuely efficacie therof, to regenerate, to plant, to water & to make fruitfull, it is peculiar to the holy Church. She onely is that way, the fountaine in which this liuing water remaineth: her plants be all watered with it, and made fruitfull. If thou doeſt feele that the pure doctrine of God dooth change thy heart and ſoften it, ſo that in ſteade of thoſe ſtinking vices, which are in it by nature, thou doeſt bring foorth vertues, then is not the fountaine ſealed vp vnto thee: but if thou heare, and heare, and reade, and bee not reformed, the fountaine is ſtill ſealed vnto thee, yea verily, the fountaine is ſtill ſealed vp vnto thee: thou art not by reading or hearing the holy worde watered, made to grow and to bring foorth fruite. Thus may wee ſee howe the Church is chaſte vnto Chriſt, bringeth forth her fruit onely to him, and watereth no plantes but her owne. And what plants theſe are, the two next verſes doo ſhewe: for here are reckoned vp all manner of the beſt plants. *Thy plants* (ſaieth hee) *are as an orchard of Pomegranates with ſweete fruites, as Camphire, and Spikenarde. Euen Spikenarde and Saffron, Calamus and Cinnamon, with all the trees of Incenſe, Myrrhe and Aloes, with all the chiefe ſpices.* Here is the goodlieſt garden that euer was heard of, in which be all theſe ſweete plants: here bee ſweete fruits, here be all the chiefe ſpices, and the ſweete

incenſe, here is whatſoeuer is delectable and precious. I mind not to ſtand vppon theſe in particular, to ſhewe the excellencie of euery of them, for that is needles: onely take the ſimilitude in general, as if there were a goodly garden in which were all the moſt precious plants vnder heauen, that doe bring forth the ſweeteſt, the moſt holeſome, the moſt daintie, and comfortable thinges that are in the world, and to this Chriſt likeneth his Church, euen his garden incloſed. By theſe goodly plants, then are meante all the faithfull, they be the Lords plants, they doo beare all theſe ſweete and delectable fruits before mentioned. What a goodly garden hath the Lord planted to himſelfe? Theſe plants haue been planted by the Lord in all ages, by the miniſterie of his holy Prophets and Apoſtles, and by the Miniſterie of all faithfull paſtors and teachers: as we reade how Paul ſayth of himſelf, I haue planted. Theſe plants hath the Lorde alſo watered from time to time by the hands of the ſame his ſeruants, euen with the pure waters of heauenly doctrine: as it is written, Apollo watereth. From hence the fruites aboue mentioned haue ſprung, as the ſounde knowledge of God, true light, ſincere and liuelie faith, ſtedfaſt hope, with vnfained loue to God and men, inuocation of the name of God, praiſe and thankeſgiuing vnto his holy maieſtie, humility, meekenes, gentlenes, long ſuffering, with all the workes of mercie which proceeding from a ſanctifi-

ſanctified heart, are ſweeter before the Lord, then all incenſe or the beſt ſpices. Happie, yea thrice happie are all thoſe men whom the Lord hath vſed, and doth vſe as his faithfull inſtruments, to plant and to water ſuch a garden, and to make it bring foorth ſuch fruits. What greater or more worthie worke can there bee in the world? Great ſhall their rewarde bee before the Lorde God which are found faithfull laborers Let all the miniſters of the Goſpell conſider well of this place, and eſteeme it a farre greater bleſſing, then if they had all worldly dignities & prefermentes, when their labours are fruitful in planting and watring the plants of this garden. And let them not bee diſcouraged, that the blind world ſeeth not the glorie of this worke, but deſpiſeth and reproacheth it. Neyther let the terrors which Satan doth raiſe, daunt or diſmay them. If a man with al his labours may plant but euen ſome very few of theſe excellent plants, which are ſo dear & precious in the eyes of the Lord, or water them ſo as they become fruitfull in thoſe forenamed fruites, what a glorie is it? What ſhould a miniſter of the Goſpell looke after beſides this? On the other ſide, let the deſtroyers and layers waſte of this garden of the Lorde, or ſuch as hinder the growth and fruitfulnes of the young plants, beholde here what an heauy iudgemente of God hangeth ouer their heads. O how grieuous is it in the ſight of the Lord which they doe? Let it bee

that an earthly prince had ſuch a garden with plants of Pomegranates, with ſweete fruites as Camphire, Spikenarde, Saffron, ſweete Calamus, and Cinamon, with all the trees of Incenſe, Myrrhe, and Aloes, with all the chiefe ſpices, and men ſhould enter into it, and deſtroye or laye it waſte, would he endure it at their hands? How then will the Lord of Lords abide that ſuch wicked men ſhall deſtroy or hinder his plants, which ſo farre paſſe thoſe earthly plants in price, & not bee reuenged? You know what a woe our Sauiour in the Goſpell doth denounce againſt him that ſhall offend one of thoſe little ones that truſt in him, ſaying, *It were better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his necke, and that hee were caſt into the bottome of the ſea*. How ſmall regarde of the people of God haue ſome had, eſteeming them little better then ſwine? What care they for planting or watring, they know not how precious the plants be? They eſteeme themſelues highly the garden which they bee in, they weigh not how they lay waſt.

Let vs proceede, as it is a moſt worthy worke to be a true planter or a waterer of this Garden, which is ſo goodly and precious in the eyes of Chriſt: ſo is it a moſt happie thing to bee a right plant. And here let euery man looke well vnto himſelfe: we all profeſſe the name of Chriſt, and ſo to be plants in this garden. Look to the fruits before named, which the right plantes doe bring forth.

forth. They bee not pride, vaine glorie, nor ſelfe loue: they bee not curſing and ſwearing, lying & ſlaundering, they be not dicing, drinking and whoring, they bee not enuie, hatred and malice, or a number ſuch like. Theſe be ſtinking and abhominable fruits before the Lord. If thou beare ſuch, what ſhall it auaile thee that thou ſtandeſt for a time as a plant in the Church? For thou ſhalt bee rooted out. True it is, that in the viſible Church there bee many ſtinking and noyſome weedes, many baſtarde plants which bring forth moſt noyſome fruites, they doo hurt and hinder what they can, the true plants, but the Lord doth put difference, hee will root them all out, & preſerue euery true plãt. It doth then ſtand vs greatly vpon, to look what fruit we bring forth, and to endeuour to bee approued as true plants. Away with thoſe filthie rotten and ſtinking workes of the fleſh, and walke in the fruits of the ſpirit. And now in the two next verſes, the Church maketh anſwere vnto her ſpouſe.

In the former verſe (whereas the Lorde had prayſed her to be ſo ſweet a garden, ſo well watered, and of ſuch precious plants) ſhe aſcribeth all the praiſe thereof vnto him, in theſe wordes, *O fountaine of the gardens, O well of liuing waters, and the ſpringes of Lebanon*. The vniuerſall Church is but one Garden, and all the particular Churches be gardens, ſo that her ſpeech and his doo not differ, when he calleth her a garden, and

ſhee calleth him the fountaine of the Gardens: when he calleth her a fountaine ſealed vp, which doth water all the plants, ſhe doth acknowledge the truth therof vnto his praiſe, affirming that he is the fountain of the gardens, that is, look whatſoeuer waters of life be in her, yea euen in al particular Churches, they flow from him, hee is the fountaine. What need I ſtand here to rehearſe vnto you thoſe places of Scripture, which doo affirme that in him is all fulnes, and that of his fulnes wee doo receiue, that he is made vnto vs of God, wiſedome, righteouſnes, ſanctification and redemption? The Bride doth acknowledge all here in one word, when ſhe calleth him the fountaine of the gardens. This is the praiſe and the glorie, which al the faithfull doo giue vnto Chriſt Ieſus, not chalenging any parte of goodneſſe to themſelues. Then that ſhee calleth him a wel of liuing waters and ſtreames that flowe out of Lebanon, or as it may be expounded, that they bee ſprings flowing, which doe excell: thoſe that flow from Lebanon, from whence as it is manifeſt by this place, did runne cleare ſprings of water: and liuing waters are thoſe that alwaies doe flowe as the ſprings, oppoſed vnto ſtanding waters. Then the ſenſe is this, that the graces, and the waters of life, which do flow from Chriſt vpon his church, are ſuch as can neuer be dried vp, they flow from a bottomles fountain, albeit hee beſtow his graces and gifts from time to time, in neuer ſo great

meaſure

measure yet they bee not diminiſhed. The Romiſh Church hath vtterly ſwarued from this, and ſeeketh vnto other Mediators to obtaine the thinges which appertaine vnto righteouſnes, and ſaluation. They will not aſcribe this glorie vnto him, that he is the fountaine of the gardens, and well of liuing waters, they be hot the bride which here ſpeaketh.

And now let vs come to the other part of her ſpeech, which is expreſſed in the nexte verſe, wherein ſhee maketh earneſt prayer: *Ariſe O North winde, and come O South winde, blowe vpon my Garden, that the ſpices thereof may flowe out: let my welbeloued come to his Garden, and eate his pleaſant fruite.* There bee two partes of this prayer: In the firſt ſhee craueth the inſpiration and gracious gifts of the holy Ghoſt, that the ſweete fruits in her may more abounde: In the ſecond part ſhe deſireth the preſence of Chriſte. I will not ſtand curiouſly vpon the nature of theſe two contrary windes, the Northwinde, and the Southwinde, but take that which is the principall, namely, that the holy Ghoſt is figured by the windes. For the North winde and the South winde, which blow vpon the trees, and which are felt of our bodily ſences, are not the winds which blow vpon the heauenly plants. It is an heauenly breathing which ſhee here requireth, euen the inſpiration of the ſpirite of grace, which is called the ſpirite of ſanctification, the ſpirite of adopti-

on. Without this fruite there is no quickening, no life, no fruite in the Church, and therefore the faithfull doo rightly call for the North winde, and for the South winde to blow vpon them, that is to bee inſpired with all graces and giftes of the holy Ghoſt, that ſo the ſweete ſauour of their fruits may flow forth: for according to the meaſure of the ſpirite which men haue receyued, ſo are their fruites. When the Lord did expreſſe the great and ſpeciall edification of his Church, hee ſaide by the Prophet Ioell, I *will powre frorth of my ſpirite vpon all fleſh*, which Saint Peter alleageth, Acts 2. And when the Lorde denounceth his iudgement, that the courſe of his Goſpell ſhould be ſtayed, which he giueth by the inſpiration of the holy Ghoſt. Saint Iohn ſeeth in a viſion foure Angels, holding the foure winds that they ſhould not blow, Reuel. 7. Well, the matter is this, all the true belieuers haue receyued the ſpirite of God, they are inſpired by the holy Ghoſt: but yet their faith, their hope, their charity, their knowledge are not perfect. The fleſh is not wholy and fully mortified in them, the vertues which are called the fruits of the ſpirite which are ſo ſweete and precious before the Lord, are not growne to their full perfection, and therfore being deſirous to bee more perfect, they crie out to haue the Northwinde and the Southwinde to blow vpon their garden: that is to haue the inſpiration and heauenly breathing of the holy Ghoſt vpon their

heartes,

hearts, for there is the garden. And vnto this garden they desire Christ to come, saying, *Let my Welbeloued come to his Garden.* Our desire indeede ought to bee continually, that wee may haue our hearts sanctified, and purged by the operation of the holy Ghost, that so the Lord Iesus may dwell in them. Doo you imagine that the heart of that man which is full of pride and vain glorie, of couetousnes and selfe loue, of fornication and vncleanesse, or such like, is a garden for the Lord Iesus to dwell in? No, no, the diuell dwelleth in such gardens. Those stinking flowers delight his nose. Looke to it beloued, whether there growe sweet flowers, or stinking weeds in your heartes: for thereby you shall know whether they be the Gardens of Christ, or the gardens of the diuell.

And now let vs come to the last verse of that which I read vnto you, which is the aunswere of Christ vnto her desire, that he wonld come to his garden. The Lorde cannot deny the godly requestes of his chosen, and therefore hee sayeth: *I am come to my Garden, my sister, my spouse, I gathered my Myrrhe with my spice, I eate my honeycombe with my honey, I dranke my wine with my milke, eate O friendes, drinke, and make you merie O welbeloued.* Beholde here how Christe dooth feast and banquet with his Church: her faith, her loue, and all the good fruits that spring from the same, are as Mirrhe and Spices, the honey combe and honey, wine and milke. This is plaine and easie

ſie to bee vnderſtoode. But how is this that hee willeth his friendes to eate and be merrie? Doth not the Church bring forth fruits only to Chriſt? Doubtles the Church doth bring forth her fruits only to Chriſt her Bridegrome, but yet the frends of the bridegrome, euen the holy Angels and the faithfull miniſters of the word, haue ioy and reioycing and glorie thereby. The Church cannot by her faith and good workes glorifie Chriſt, but the benefite thereof doth redound to the ioy & felicitie of the Angels in heauen, and well may they be ſaid to eate and drinke, and to be merry. This is cleare, and therefore I will not ſtand to ſhewe what Saint Peter ſpeaketh of the deſire which the Angels haue to beholde the accompliſhment of all thinges betweene Chriſt and his Church, 1. Pet. 1. Neither the triumphant ioy of thoſe heauēly companies at the mariage day, Reuel. 19. verſ. 7. Happie and bleſſed are all they which come to this banquette.

The Lord bring vs vnto it
for his mercies ſake.
Amen.

THE

THE NINTH SERMON.

CHAP. V.

1 *I ſleepe, but mine heart waketh, it is the voice of my welbeloued that knocketh, open vnto me, my ſiſter, my loue, my doue, my vndefiled: for my head is full of dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.*

2 *I haue put off my coat, how ſhould I put it on? I haue waſhed my feete how ſhall I defile them?*

3 *My welbeloued put in his hand by the hole of the dore, and mine heart was affectioned towardes him.*

4 *I roſe vp to open to my welbeloued: and my hands did drop downe Myrrhe, and my fingers pure Mirrhe vpon the handles of the barre.*

5 *I opened to my welbeloued: but my welbeloued was gone and paſt: mine heart was gone when he did ſpeake, I ſought him, but I could not finde him, I called him, but he anſwered me not.*

6 *The Watchmen that went aboute the Cittie, found*

found me, they ſmote me, and wounded me, the watchmen of the walles tooke away my vaile from me.

WEe had in the former Chapter almoſt nothing but the prayſes and commendations which Chriſte giueth to his Church: ſo highlie, and with ſo manie ſpeeches doth hee magnifie and extoll her beautie and excellencie. Here in this Chapter we haue another manner of Song, euen an accuſing and a bewailing ſong: for here ſhee accuſeth herſelfe, and bewaileth her greate offence, her vnkindnes and vndutifulnes which ſhee ſhewed towatds her moſt kinde and louing ſpouſe, reporting alſo the greate affection and calamitie that light vppon her by that meanes. It is a ſtrange thing that there ſhould be ſuch a ſodaine alteration: but this is the ſtate of the regenerate, euen now enflamed and rapte with a burning loue and zeale of Chriſt: by and by, all ſeemeth to bee ſmothered and almoſt quenched. This is the battaile in them, betweene the fleſh and the ſpirite: this is from the imperfection, that is in all the Saints.

But let vs come to her words: *I ſleepe* (ſayeth ſhee) *but mine heart waketh*. Beholde the holie virgin here falleth a ſleepe (for ſo ſhee ſaith) but not

not(as wee may saye)into a dead sleepe: for her heart is waking. Shee doth but slumber as one that is halfe a sleep. We must consider here three thinges especially, what this sleepe is, whence it proceedeth, and what the effectes thereof bee. Touching the first, it were greate follie for anie man to take it of the bodily or naturall sleepe: seeing the Church is to bee considered altogether according to her spirituall and heauenlie birth. It must needes then be a spiritual slumber, euen a drousines in the heart and mind, touching heauenly things. This proceedeth from the remnantes of the olde man in the godlie. *The flesh* (sayeth the holy Apostle) *lusteth against the spirit, and the spirite is against the flesh, and these are contrarie the one to the other, so that yee cannot doo the thinges that you would*, Galath. 5. verse 17. When these concupiscences, these corrupt and worldly lustes wax strong, and doo seeme euen much to preuaile, then is there a damping of the spirituall graces, euen as it were a slumber that falleth vpon the minde: I neede not stande vpon this. Now what effectes doo follow, may easily bee gathered: faith hath not the full and liuely operation, loue sheweth not her hearte: prayer waxeth feeble. The ioy and delight in all holy exercises is decayed, and so the practising of vertue is but slender. But here is not all: for the holy scripture in sondrie places calleth vpon vs to take heede that wee fall not into this sleep,

but

but that wee watch, ſhewing great danger that may enſue. *Be ſober and watch* (ſaieth the Apoſtle) *for your aduerſarie the Diuell goeth about like a roaring lyon, ſeeking whome he may deuoure*: When wee bee a ſleepe, the Diuell ſteppeth in to leade vs vnto many ſinnes. And ſurely the regenerate in their ſleepe and ſecurity doo committe and beare with much vanitie, and many ſinnes they goe ſmoothly away withall. They are not in this ſleep ſo much grieued as they ought to be when the name of God is diſhonoured. Yet here is one ſpeciall thing to be noted, that when ſhe was a ſleepe, yet her heart was waking: what is that? Or what doth that ſhew vnto vs? It ſheweth playnely that the true and liuely faith, and the ſpirite of ſanctification are neuer vtterly extinguiſhed. The worke of the new birth can neuer be quite put out: a moſt ſingular comforte. The faithfull doo fall oftentimes into great ſecuritie, negligent they are in performing holy duties, yea they doo commit grieuous ſinnes (as Dauid in his ſecurity, did commit adulterie and murther) but yet the heart waketh, there remaineth ſomewhat within, the ſleepe is not deadly: all faith, all loue, all zeale is not gone, howſoeuer the luſtes of the fleſh play their parte for a time. This doth Saint Iohn plainely teach, ſaying, *Whoſoeuer is borne of God, ſinneth not, for his ſeede remaineth in him, neyther can he ſinne becauſe hee is borne of God*, 1. Iohn 3. verſe. 9. From hence it is that

that when the Church ſleepeth, her heart waketh that the ſeede of God doth remaine in her. And from hence it is that ſhe cannot looſe the worke of ſanctification, that ſhee is borne of God, who is immortall and vnchangeable. And as it is written, *Euery branch that beareth fruite, hee purgeth, that it may beare more fruite*, Iohn 15. *No fruitfull branch ſhall bee cut off*. Then let them goe, which with the Papiſts would vpholde and maintaine that wicked opinion, that the true iuſtifying faith and ſanctifying ſpirite, may bee had and vtterly loſt. Well, thus hath the Bride in few words ſet forth into what eſtate ſhe was fallen, and now ſhe ſetteth forth in the next place, the greate kindnes and loue of her ſpouſe, who ſeeketh to awake, & to raiſe her out of this dangerous ſleepe. *Hee knocketh, and hee calleth, it is* (ſaieth ſhee) *the voice of my welbeloued that knocketh*. Theſe ſpeeches are vſed in other places of the holy Scripture, for to the Church of the Laodicians, which was neyther hote nor colde, the Lord Ieſus ſayeth, *Beholde I ſtande at the dore & knocke, if anie man will heare my voice & will open the dore, I will come in vnto him, and will ſuppe with him, and he with me*. Reuel. 3. verſ. 19. 20. Alſo he calleth vppon the Church of Sardie to awake, to ſtrengthen the thinges that remaine which are readie to die, Reuel. 3. verſe 2. This is the ſingular kindnes of our Lord to knocke and call at the dore of our hearts, to waken vs when

wee

we are fallen a ſleepe: hee will not looſe his beloued, whome he hath bought ſo deare. This great kindnes of his, dooth the bride here ſet foorth in theſe his ſpeeches: *open vnto me, my ſiſter, my loue, my doue, my vndefiled for my head is full of dew, and locks with the droppes of the night.* Firſt, he that is the rich treaſure of all felicitie, dooth offer himſelfe to dwell in the hearte, for hee dooth knocke, and ſayeth, *Open to mee*: what greater kindnes can be ſhewed? And moſt happie are they which doo open vnto him. What is al the whole ſounde of the Goſpel, but a knocking and a calling of the Lord, to haue vs open the dore of our hearts to let him in? And marke well how the faithfull, euen in their ſleepe, can tell that it is the voice of Chriſt, when hee doth knocke and call. Hee ſaith, *My ſheepe heare my voice*, Iohn 10. Many ſay they cannot tell which is the trueth when they heare it, or which is the voyce, and doctrine of Chriſt, for how ſhould they know? or how ſhould they be able to iudge? Doth not euery ſect of falſe teachers boldly and conſtantly affirme, that theirs is the doctrine of God? Such as doo ſpeake thus, doo plainely confeſſe that they bee vtterly voide of Gods ſpirite, and of all grace, and that indeede they bee not of his ſheepe, which heare and know his voice: they be not of his Church, which euen in her ſleepe doth know his voice. If the faithfull (as it is here manifeſt) doo heare and knowe the voyce of Chriſte when

when they bee a ſleepe, how much more when they be awake.

Then in the next place, mark what kind words he giueth to his Church, and what honor he doth vouchſafe her, for hee calleth her *his ſiſter, his loue, his doue, his vndefiled.* The Lord dooth not flatter nor faine, for he is the truth it ſelf, he hath freely laide al this dignitie and honour vpon her, and made her thus precious, and dear vnto himſelfe. In the next clauſe of his ſpeech which ſhee reporteth, hee doth perſwade her to open vnto him for this cauſe, that hee hath vndergone ſo much for her ſake, his head is wet with dew, and his lockes with the drops of the night. The ſimilitude is drawne from hence, as if a louer ſhoulde goe farre in the night, and indure much inconuenience to viſite his ſpouſe for her good. True it is, that the paines and ſorowes which Chriſte hath vndergone for his ſpouſe, cannot bee expreſſed. And now marke to what end ſhee reporteth here his kinde and louing ſpeeches, and the thinges which he did vndergoe and indure for her ſake. Surely, ſhee doth by this deepely accuſe her ſelfe, and aggrauate her owne offence, euen bewayling it: for the greater his loue and kindneſſe is which he doth vtter by his wordes, and the greater inconueniences he doth vndergo for her ſake, the more haynous is her offence, the more grieuous is her breach of dutie, which ſhe openeth in the words that follow, when ſhe would not open

vnto him. As if ſhe ſhould ſay: ah wretch that I am, how great is my ſinne, that hee being ſo exceeding kind and louing vnto me, and induring ſo harde thinges for my ſake, I ſhewed my ſelfe ſo vnkinde and ſo vndutifull vnto him? For beloued, wee muſt needes in all reaſon confeſſe this, that the greater the loue and kindneſſe of Chriſt is towards his Church, and the harder thinges he hath gone through for her ſake the more hainous is her offence in ſetting ſo light thereby, and in ſhewing her ſelfe vnkinde and vndutifull towardes him. And now marke how ſhe ſhewed her ſelfe vnkinde and vndutifull: for ſhe layeth open all the matter, and confeſſeth euen againſt her ſelfe how it was. She was in the warme bed of ſecuritie and carnall eaſe, ſhe is very loath for his ſake to ariſe out of it, and therefore ſhe maketh theſe excuſes, *I haue put off my coate, howe ſhall I put it on? I haue waſhed my feete, how ſhall I defile them?* We may eaſily vnderſtand theſe excuſes according to a literall ſence: and vnder theſe two are meant all the excuſes which the fleſh doth miniſter vnto the faithfull, when they bee fallen into the ſpirituall ſleepe, and are laide downe in the bed of ſecuritie, to hold them from riſing out of it at the calling of Chriſt. O they be a number of excuſes which the fleſh doth miniſter in ſuch caſes. Is it reaſon that I ſhould ſo bee diſeaſed? ſhall I forgoe ſuch and ſuch pleaſures and commodities? yea ſhall I caſt my ſelfe into ſo great

great inconuenience and daunger? I thinke the Church was neuer in greater ſlumber and ſecuritie then it is now here in this lande: peace and wealth hath wrought it. And let euerie man enter into his owne conſcience, and ſee what excuſes the fleſh doeth miniſter to keepe him backe at the dayly knocking and calling of Chriſt to open the hart vnto him, that there may be a ſound profeſsion of the Goſpell. Is there not a feare of this or that incouenience or harme that will follow? Are we not loath to take any paines, or to forgoe any vaine delights and pleaſures? and is there not great colour of reaſon in all our excuſes? And I pray you marke well, ſhe doeth here make excuſes why ſhee could not ariſe to let him in, but yet ſhe did not forſake him, he is ſtill her welbeloued: for ſo ſhe ſaid, *it is the voice of my welbeloued.* How then? why ſhe knoweth him, ſhe heareth him, ſhe loueth him, but it is in ſuch a drowſie manner, as that ſhe will hold the world and him together. She will not caſt her ſelfe into perill, nor forſake the vaine delightes of the fleſh for his ſake. Behold how ſtrong the remnants of ſinne be which remaine euen in the faithfull and deare children of God. Whither ſhould they fall if the Lord ſhould let them alone? Doe they not euen refuſe to open the doore of their heart vnto Chriſt? Is not this a maruellous vnkindnes? and doeth it not deſerue ſharpe puniſhment? Surely wee muſt needes looke for it: if not in generall

ſcourges, yet in particular corrections and chaſtiſements vppon thoſe which doe appertaine to the Lorde, and whome he will raiſe out of their ſleepe.

Now let vs proceede vnto that which dooth followe: *My welbeloued put in his hand by the hole of the dore, and mine hearte was affectioned towardes him.* The Church dealing ſo vnkindly, her ſpouſe will now withdrawe himſelfe after a ſorte from her, but yet hee will firſt leaue that behinde, that ſhall both raiſe her vp to ſeeke after him, and ſupport her in her afflictions. This is his mercie, hee will not ſuffer her to continue in that ſleepe, which ſhee was fallen into, hee will make her to ſee her offence, and repent for it, yea ſhee ſhall ſeeke him ſorrowing, and ſuffer great affliction, he withdrawing himſelfe after a ſorte, that ſhee may take better heede to her ſelfe hereafter, and bee more carefull of her owne good. That ſhe ſayeth, *hee put in his hand at the hole*, and our tranſlation addeth *of the dore*, it doth rightlie in deede expreſſe the ſenſe. The ſimilitude is taken from hence, when a dore is locked, yet there is a key hole, and ſo here: when the heartes of the faithfull be after a ſort locked vp, and Chriſt ſtandeth at the dore of the hearte, and calleth and knocketh, yet they doo not open vnto him, but make excuſes, hee doth finde ſome little creuice or hole, as through the dore, to put in his hande. This hand is the ſpirit of Chriſt, for he doth by his

ſpirit

ſpirite touch the very inward parts of her hearte. And what followeth of that inward touch of his ſpirit? She telleth yee, when ſhe ſayeth, *my bearte was affectioned towardes him.* The words are thus, my bowels were moued towardes him. Whereby is meant, that all the inwarde affections and powers of her minde, are moued with repentance. Now ſhee is grieued, and diſpleaſed with her ſelf, now ſhe lamenteth her owne follie, that ſhee was ſo vndutifull, now her hearte is againe rapt with loue of him, now ſhe will entertaine him. Behold here the power of Gods ſpirit what an alteration hee maketh in men, how farre he changeth them from that which they were before, downe goeth the power of the fleſh where hee commeth. An example of it you may ſee in the Apoſtles of Chriſt, how weake were they and fearefull at the time of Chriſtes ſuffering, Peter himſelfe denieth his maiſter at the voyce of a mayde: but after the holy Ghoſt came downe vppon them, in the day of Pentecoſt, of a companie of weake and trembling lambes, they became ſo many mightie Lyons, they feared not the whole world. So is it with all the true children of the Church, they bee heauie and lumpiſh and dull when the fleſhe hath a ſtroke, and beareth ſome ſwaye. Euerie ſmall thing is a let, and miniſtreth ſome excuſe to keepe them backe: and the excuſes ſeeme to be reaſonable. But when the touch of the holie ſpirit commeth, that Chriſt put in his hand at the

hole of the dore, then there is a quickneſſe, a life and a mouing, then nothing can let but they will ſeeke Chriſt. Is it then (beloued) a thing moſt neceſſarie, that wee continually begge of the Lord, to giue vs his ſpirit: for we cannot conceiue what a wonderfull change and alteration he will work in vs. He putteth downe the fleſh, and raigneth with power. We remaine dull, ſlowe, fearefull, weake and negligent, becauſe we reſt in our owne power very much, and doe not inſtantly and continually craue the gifts of the ſpirit. But will ſome man ſay, doeth not Chriſt dwell alwaies in the hearts of the regenerate? And haue they not alwaies the ſpirite of ſanctification? How then is it ſaide, that Chriſt calleth and knocketh to haue them open vnto him, and to let him in, and they make excuſes and refuſe? Or how is it that hee now toucheth them with his ſpirite, which they had before? This is eaſie to bee anſwered: for we muſt note, that there bee degrees of the meaſure of graces and giftes of the holy Ghoſt. The Apoſtles had the holy Ghoſt, and did belieue before Chriſts aſcenſion: but not in that meaſure which afterward. So alſo the Lord Ieſus dwelleth in all the faithfull, euen in thoſe which haue but the leaſt ſparke of the true and liuely faith: but hee knocketh to haue them open the doores of their heartes wider, and to receiue him in after a more full manner. *Lift vp your heades ye gates* (ſaith the Prophet) *and bee ye lift vp yee euerlaſting doores.*

and

and the king of glory ſhall come in. Pſal. 24. We muſt ſet the dores of our harts wide open vnto Chriſt, that he may dwell and raigne in vs,

Let vs returne againe to the Spouſe: beholde what a working this hath in her that Chriſt put in his hand. See what a mouing followeth vpon her repentance: for ſhee ſtayeth not in the bare motions of the minde (as many haue ſome touch and ſome motions, but they vaniſh) but ſhe ariſeth to open the dore vnto her welbeloued: it is not now grieuous vnto her to put on her coate. O quickning ſpirit of grace, O happie touch with the finger of Chriſt, what ſhould become of vs, what duties to our Lord God ſhoulde vvee performe vvithout him? And novv marke vvhat followeth: *My hands* (ſaith ſhe) *did droppe downe myrrhe, and my fingers pure myrrhe vppon the handles of the barre.* In theſe vvordes ſhe magnifieth the graces of her vvelbeloued. She could touch nothing vvith her handes, nor lay her fingers vpon nothing vvhere he had put in his hand, but all did droppe vvith myrrhe, euen vvith pure myrrhe. For this is her meaning, that her welbeloued did but put in his hand, & yet he had left euen by his touch, ſuch aboundance of ſweet graces, that wherſoeuer ſhe toucheth her hands drop vvith the ſame. What a wonderfull ſvveet Sauiour is this? And hovv happy are they vvhoſe harts he doth thus touch? When this heauenly pure myrrhe in ſuch plenty is put into the heart, al the

affections are moued. The ſoule cannot but bewaile her follie & vnkindneſſe ſhewed to ſo ſweet a Sauiour. There cannot but follow a loue, a zeale, and a care to performe all duties. The Lord extend this mercie towards vs, euen to put in his hand at the dore of our harde and dull hearts to leaue there this pure Myrrhe, that the hands and fingers of our ſoules may drop therewith, that ſo we may bee moued with greater and more earneſt affection to ſeeke the Lorde, then hetherto we haue. If he let vs alone, whether will our fleſh carrie vs? howe deepe and daungerous will our ſleepe be that we are fallen into? The fruites of the fleſh which ſo grieuouſly breake foorth, euen in the forwardeſt profeſſors of the Goſpell, doe manifeſtly bewraye that wee are fallen a ſleepe. The Lord hath called and doth continue calling and knocking at the dores of our heartes, but we are full of excuſes. Some are giuen to worldly delightes and pleaſures. Others are ſet ſo vpon gathering and heaping vp riches, that they cannot open vnto Chriſt.

It followeth in the text, I *opened vnto my welbeloued : but my welbeloued was gone and paſte*: This is ſtrange, that he calleth and knocketh whē ſhe was a ſleepe and lay in her bed, and now when ſhee is riſen out of her bed, and dooth open the doore to let him in, he withdraweth himſelf and will not bee ſeene. Her vnkinde dealing did deſerue this. But dooth this proceede from loue in him

him that he doth withdraw himſelfe. Hee hath iuſt cauſe to bee diſpleaſed, and ſo to withdrawe himſelfe: but yet he dooth it euen of purpoſe for her good, and that of a ſingular loue. But ſeeing Chriſt dooth dwell alwaies in the faithfull, how can it be ſaide that he doth withdraw himſelf out of their ſight, eſpecially when he hath made their hands to drop with myrrhe? This is out of doubt that the Lord is ſometimes preſent in the ſoules of the faiihfull, and yet to their thinking he ſeemeth to bee abſent. Hee doth ſupport them and yet they haue not that liuely and comfortable feeling of his preſence which they wiſh, & which ſometimes they had. Then the heart is troubled, then they mourne, then they ſeeke and call after him: for ſhee ſayeth, *mine heart was gone when hee did ſpeake, I ſought him, but I could not finde him, I called him, but he anſwered mee not.* Alas nowe ſhe is afraid that her vnkind dealing ſhould cauſe him to forſake her. Now ſhee openeth the dores of her heart to let him in, ſhee ſeeketh him, and calleth after him, but he will not be found. Who is able to expreſſe the grief and ſorrowe that the godly ſoule hath, when there is a deepe remorſe for ſinne, and ſhe ſeeketh to feele the conſolation of Chriſt, and he hideth himſelfe from her? True it is that the ſoule could not repent, ſhee coulde not open the dore to receiue him in, ſhee coulde not ſo earneſtly ſeeke and call after him, vnleſſe he were preſent, and did worke theſe thinges in her

her. For al theſe things proceede from his grace: but yet he doth ſeeme to be abſent. Let not this ſeeme ſtrange, when as the glorious Godheade vnited to the manhead in Chriſt, was not ſeparated from the ſame, when he did hang vpon the croſſe, but did as it were retaine, or not ſhewe forth the power, that the ſame manhood might ſuffer the puniſhment that is due to ſinne, and ſo make ſatisfaction, and yet he cried out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken mee?* Shall not we then take it in ſome ſorte that he forſaketh vs, euen when yet he is preſent? But here againe it will bee demanded, how that which is ſpoken in this place, agreeth with the promiſe which is made, *Seeke and yee ſhall finde. &c.* ſeeing here is no mention for all vehement calling after him that ſhee doth finde him, yea ſtill ſhe goeth on, and it is not ſaide that ſhe found him. I anſwere, that here is indeed a moſt vehement ſeeking, and not ſaid that ſhe found him, but yet in the beginning of the next Chapter, ſhe ſayeth, *hee was gone downe into his Garden*. Then ſhe perceyueth at the laſt that he is preſent with her, and there indeede ſhe gloryeth of him. How cõmeth this to paſſe? Surely, he entreth in when the doore is opened, though ſhe doth not perceiue it. This is the doctrine which I gather, which I would make plain vnto you: that when the faithfull ſoule is moued with earneſt repentance, and doth ſeeke and crie after the Lord Ieſus Chriſt, and ſeemeth not to

finde

finde him, yet ſhe doth finde him. Chriſt dooth not enter in ſo fullie and at once that ſhe dooth perceiue it, and yet in the end ſhe findeth that he is come to his garden. She findeth that her riſing out of her ſleepe and from her bed, her opening the doore, ſeeking and calling after him, were not in vain. This (beloued) ought greatlie to encourage vs, that when wee ſeeke and cannot perceiue that we finde, not to giue ouer: for doubtles in the end, we ſhall well perceiue that our ſeeking and our ſorrowing after him hath been to good purpoſe. Many ſeeke, and becauſe they find not euen according to their deſire at the firſt, they faint and giue ouer: but wee muſt remember that Chriſt is very precious, and if with long and great ſeeking, wee find that we haue gotten euen ſome little holde for to retaine him with vs, it is much. To gaine but a little in heauenlie things, euen with very great labour and trauaile, is much.

And now to the laſt verſe which I did reade: *The Watchmen that went aboute the cittie founde mee, they ſmote mee, and wounded mee: the Watchmen of the walles tooke away my vaile from mee*, Here now ſhe reporteth what grieuous calamitie and affliction came vppon her. *The Watchmen found her*, and what doe they? Her wordes bee plaine, that *they ſmote her, and wounded her, and tooke away her vaile*. For vnder theſe ſpeeches

ſhee

ſhe ſetteth forth a very great affliction that light vpon her, as it ſhall appeare, if we doo marke the circumſtances well in all thinges. Firſt, her conſcience accuſeth her how vnkindly ſhe hath dealt towardes Chriſt, who hath withdrawne himſelfe worthily for the ſame. Then next, her protector hiding away himſelfe, what a feare is it to a tender virgin in the night to fall into the handes of rough and churliſh fellowes? yea when they bee highly diſpleaſed with her, as it appeareth they are: for they beate her, and that grieuouſly, for they doe wound her. O what a cruelty is this? what ſauage men are theſe? Yea, marke further who they be. They bee the watchmen, euen they that of all others ſhould chiefly defend and comforte her, for the watchmen are the ſhepheardes, the paſtors and teachers. The Prophets of God doo complaine of the wicked prieſtes in the time of the Law, how they did afflict the godly. And how great are the calamities which the ſincere profeſſors of the Goſpell haue ſuffered a long time, I may ſay many hundred yeers, at the hands of the proud Romiſh prelates? what is the cauſe that they bee ſo diſpleaſed? Surely, becauſe ſhee ſeeketh after Chriſt. They will beare with any diſorder ſauing that. They bee proude, they bee pompous, they be delicate, they be blinde, euen like to the blind Pharaſies. If anie ryot, or exceſſe be committed, theſe Watchmen bee good fellowes

lowes: but if any ſeeke Chriſt, that is intolerable that is to their diſgrace, vppon ſuch a fall, they beate and wound them. And as the mother of al here complayneth, they take away her vaile. For virgins to haue a vaile, it was for modeſtie and chaſtitie, and ſo it was an honour. They do deface and diſhonor her all that they can: for they will make as though ſhee were an harlot. They tearme them that ſeeke Chriſt, Heretikes, Schiſmatikes and fantaſticall. They laye all the moſt vile reproches vpon them which they can deuiſe. Let it not then trouble vs when it commeth to paſſe, that thoſe which haue the office and place to teach the Church, doe beate and wound, and diſgrace her. Did not the builders refuſe Chriſte himſelfe the head corner ſtone? What maruaile then, though they beate his ſeruantes? Thus much for this time.

THE

THE TENTH SERMON.

Chap. V.

7 I charge you, O daughters of Ieruſalem, if you finde my welbeloued: that you tell him that I am ſick of loue.

8 O fayreſt among women, what is thy welbeloued more then an other welbeloued? what is thy welbeloued more then an other louer, that thou doeſt ſo charge vs?

9 My welbeloued is white and ruddie, the chiefeſt of ten thouſand.

10 His heade is as fine golde, his lockes curled and blacke as a rauen.

11 His eyes are like doues vpon the riuers of waters, which are waſht with milke, and remaine by the full veſſels.

12 His cheekes are as a bed of ſpices, and as ſweete flowers, and his lippes like lillies dropping down pure Mirrhe.

13 His hands like ringes of golde, ſet with the Chryſolite: his bellie like white Iuorie couered with Saphires.

14 His

14 *His legges are as pillars of marble, ſet vpon ſockets of fine golde, his countenance as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.*

15 *His mouth is as ſweete thinges, and he is wholy delectable, this is my welbeloued, this is my louer, O daughters of Ieruſalem.*

16 *O the fayreſt among women, whether is thy welbeloued gone? whether is thy welbeloued turned aſide, that we may ſeeke him with thee.*

17 *My welbeloued is gone downe into his garden, to the beds of ſpices, that he may feede in the gardens & gather the lillies.*

IN the former parte of this Chapter wee haue ſeene how the Bridegrome calling and knocking to raiſe his Spouſe out of her ſleepe, euen from her carnall ſecuritie, what excuſes ſhee made, how vnkindly and how vndutifully ſhe dealt with him. Moreouer wee haue ſeene how hee for the ſame vnkindneſſe did hide himſelfe from her, ſhe ſeeketh after him, and falleth into the hands of the Watchmen, euen into the hands of proud prelates and falſe paſtors, which dealt very cruelly with her, they did not kill her: for God will not ſuffer his Church to be rooted out. Nay you ſhall ſee, that they did not with all their roughe tyrannie ſo much as once daunt or diſcourage her frō ſeeking after Chriſt. They beate her, they wounded her, and tooke away

way her vayle, doth ſhee now ſhrinke for feare, or doth ſhee hide her head, and giue ouer ſeeking? No verily, ſhe goeth on in her ſearch, and is more vehement then before: when the fleſh had preuailed to caſte her into a ſleepe, thoſe ſeemed great and waightie reaſons to withholde her, *I haue put off my coate, and I haue waſhed my feete*: For how (ſayeth ſhe) *ſhall I put it on? and how ſhall I fowle them?* Chriſte ſeemeth to require that at her hands, which was without al reaſon, but after he had touched her inwardly with his ſpirite, ſhe ſaith not, I haue ſought him, and by ſeeking haue beene beaten, wounded and diſgraced, how ſhall I ſeeke him any longer? There is now a fire kindled in her, which none can quench, the fleſh now with all the excuſes which it can make, is put downe. The faithfull doo neuer loue Chriſt, nor ſeeke after him with more burning zeale, then in time of hote perſecution. All experience hath taught this from time to time. And the practize of the ſpouſe doth here fullie ſhew it. It was to this end and purpoſe that he put in his hande at the hole of the doore, and left that ſweet Myrrhe with which her fingers did drop. The trueth is, that in thoſe times of calamitie, the Lorde ſeemeth to hide himſelf away, and to bee diſpleaſed for the ſinnes of his people, yea, euen to be farre from them, but yet by that inwarde touche, by putting in his hand, he is very neere vnto them: he doth ſupport & comfort them moſt mightilie.

Let

Let vs therefore come to her words, out of which theſe thinges are to be gathered. *I charge you O daughters of Ieruſalem &c.* She doth here lay a ſtraight charge againe vpon her companions: for her words are, I binde you with an oath, or I doe cauſe you to ſweare. This ſheweth great vehemencie, as it ſhall alſo appeare by their anſwere. Now for the matter of her charge, thus it ſtandeth, *If you finde my welbeloued, what will you tell him that I am ſicke of loue?* The manner of her ſpeech that ſhe ſaith, *What will you tell him?* And then addeth, *That I am ſicke of loue,* doth ſhew a moſt vehement paſsion. For indeede the wordes are not ſo vttered as to ſay, If you finde my welbeloued, tell him, but what will you tell him? This demanding the queſtion, ſheweth that her loue did ſo appeare, that they muſt needs if they will tell him any thing, tell him that ſhee is ſicke of loue. This is exceeding great loue, that ſhe commeth to bee loue ſicke. If the fleſh had borne ſway, that would haue reaſoned after another ſorte, as thus: I opened the doore, and hee withdrew himſelfe, and by that occaſion I haue ſuffered great calamitie, therefore I haue ſmall cauſe to loue him: ſeeing hee doth hide himſelfe from mee, and cauſe me to bee thus ſtricken and wounded, why ſhoulde I ſet mine heart vppon him? The fleſh, I ſay, would miniſter ſuch kinde of reaſons: but the faithfull are not ledde by the wiſdome of the fleſh, but by the heauenly ſpirit,

which teacheth them the more they ſuffer for Chriſt, the more to loue him. This is a thing paſſing all humane reaſon, that the bride hauing fallen into ſo great affliction by ſeeking after her bridegrome, is thereupon ſick of loue. The faithfull in deed reioyce in afflictions, it is an honour vnto them to ſuffer for Chriſt, and the more they ſuffer for his ſake, he doth ſo ſtrengthen them, & ſo worke in them, that the more they loue him. There is more zeale and more earneſt prayer to God, among the faithfull, in the times of affliction and perſecution, then in the time of proſperitie and worldly peace, for then commonly men doe growe ſecure. Thus hauing heard what the ſpouſe ſaith to the daughters of Ieruſalem, let vs nowe ſee what aunſwere they doe make. *O thou fayreſt among women, what is thy welbeloued more then an other welbeloued, what is thy welbeloued more then another louer, than that doeſt ſo charge vs?* Firſt of all we may obſerue here, that theſe daughters of Ieruſalem doe beholde and acknowledge a great beautie in the Spouſe, that they call her the faireſt among women. Such as be goodly to behold, if they fall into affliction, that maketh them to ſeeme baſe and contemptible. The Church then being beaten and wounded by the watchmen, and her vaile taken from her, being I ſay thus diſhonoured and diſgraced, what beautie could they behold in her? Afflictions doe make baſe and contemptible to the outward

ward ſhew: but the beautie of the Church is not outward in thinges of this life, but in ſpiritual ornaments, which are not diminiſhed or dimmed by afflictions, but doe then in deede ſhine brighteſt of all. For in the times of the greateſt perſecution, when the godly are impriſoned, racked, and tormented, you ſhall behold their ſtedfaſt faith, their feruent zeale, their patience, their cõtempt this of world, with many other vertues: for which the daughters of Ieruſalem, euen the weaker ſorte which are not as yet fully come to Chriſt, do commend the Spouſe to be the faireſt among women. Doubtles the verie tyrantes and perſecutors themſelues, are ſometimes conſtrained to wonder at the glorie of the faith and patience of the Martyrs.

Then in the next place, wee may note, how theſe daughters of Ieruſalem do as it were wonder why ſhe is ſo earneſt in ſeeking her welbeloued, that ſhe doth ſo charge them with an oathe, to tell them that ſhe is ſick of loue: and herevpon they enquire and aske her what there is in him more then in another welbeloued. For if there be not an excellencie in him aboue all other, why ſhould ſhe bee ſo vehement in ſeeking him? We do account it a vanitie to be vehement in ſeeking that which is little worth. Here is a verie ſpeciall thing to be obſerued: and that is, that the earneſt ſeeking of the faithfull after Chriſt, is a meane to ſtirre vp others to enquire what hee is, or what

here is in him. Reaſon doth leade men thus far, when they ſee that no threatnings, no bonds, no tortures nor ſuffringes can preuaile, but that the faithfull doe become more earneſt in ſeeking Chriſt, to ſay within themſelues, out of all doubt there is ſome great thing that carrieth theſe men; it is no ſmall benefit for which they will endure all theſe things. Hereupon they begin to enquire what Chriſt is: *What is thy welbeloued* (ſay they) *more then another welbeloued, O thou fayreſt among women, what is thy welbeloued more then another louer, that thou doeſt ſo charge vs?* Here is one great ſtep towards eternall life, when men doe begin to enquire after the Lord Ieſus Chriſt, and are deſirous to know what his benefites and graces bee. Where wee may note, what a good thing it is to be zealous and earneſt in the profeſsion of the Goſpell, and in ſeeking the Lord Ieſus Chriſt. O it winneth ſoules: for it cauſeth ſuch as had little regard, to enter into the conſideration what Chriſt is, when they ſee that others be ſo earneſtly bent, and cannot be driuen back by no meanes from ſeeking after him. And when there is a coldneſſe, eſpecially in the miniſters of the Goſpell, ſo that they ſeeke more earneſtly after the thinges of this life, then they doe to ſet vp the kingdome of God; doth it not as it were beate into the heads of the ignorant and ſimpler ſort, that the Goſpell is a thing of no very great price? for if it were worth the while, if it

ſhould

ſhould bring ſuch felicitie, would not the teachers themſelues ſet more by it, then by the tranſitorie thinges of this life? What is this but to lay ſtumbling blockes before the lame, and to cauſe the blinde to go out of their way, which thing God doth accurſe in the lawe? Wo be to them therefore, who ought to bee the moſt zealous of all others in forſaking this world, and ſeeking after Chriſt, that by their zeale they might ſtirre vp ſuch as know not the Lord, to enquire what the matter is about which they bee ſo hote and vehement: and they bee ſo cold that way, and ſo ſtudious for this world, that they driue them backe. Beloued, know this alſo, that whoſoeuer he bee, though meane in the worlde, that in ſimplicitie and ſinglenes of heart, with earneſt zeale ioyned with meekenes, doth ſeeke the Lord, he ſhall bee a meane, yea euen an happie inſtrument to winne others.

Let vs proceede: The daughters of Ieruſalem demaund, *What is thy welbeloued more then an other welbeloued?* And hereupon ſhe deſcribeth him vnto them. Firſt before we enter into the examination of the particulars, wee may conſider in generall how that ſhe ſetteth foorth here the riches, the dignitie, the glorie and beautie of Chriſt. This is the office of the Church, to publiſh Chriſt crucified. And now moſt willingly ſhe doth it, when the daughters of Ieruſalem are ſo inquiſitiue for to know him. She deſcribeth

him at large, to the end that it may appeare there is good cauſe to moue her ſo earneſtly to ſeeke him, and that it may be known what a rich iewell they obtaine that doe finde him. Moreouer, doe you not ſee heere that it is not perſecution that can ſtop the mouth of the Church, or make her keepe ſilence, but ſhe will publiſh and lay open the glorie and the praiſe of her welbeloued. O how the cruell enemies doe ſtorme, how they gnaſh their teeth, how they fret and rage? when the ſincere and holy doctrine of Chriſt is publiſhed, which dooth lay open the rich treaſures of his grace, that in him there is all fulnes of good thinges to make men happie: and yet for all their furie, the faithfull ſeruauants of the Lord will not be ſilent, but deſcribe him and paint him forth. True it is, when Chriſt is earneſtly ſought, and when his graces are throughly laid open, it doth diſpleaſe proude heretikes, which ſtand to maintaine their owne doctrine and wicked errors. Alſo the gloſing hypocrites which boaſt of their owne merits, and glory in themſelues, cannot abide it. Yea ſuch as haue made their bellie their god, that mind earthly things, are angry, becauſe it is a great rebuke vnto them, that Chriſt being ſo excellent, they preferre the world before him, They would faine ſeeme good, being altogether worldly: and when it is made manifeſt that they make a blinde and a wicked choiſe, in ſetting much by the world, and ſo little by Chriſt, it doth

disgrace them. But howsoeuer they doe take it, the holy Church describeth Christ. And in the first place she speaketh of his colour and complection, saying, *My welbeloued is White and ruddie*. These two colours together doe shew a right excellent constitution of bodie, and also a very perfect beautie. The Lord is goodly and glorious, he is strong, and shall remaine for euer in perfect health. Yea he is so excellent, that she saith, *he is the chiefe of ten thousand*. Or as the verie words are, *he is the standard bearer of ten thousand*. He doth indeede very far excell all creatures whatsoeuer, euen men and Angels: and therefore she saith, *hee is euen as the standard bearer of tenne thousand*.

Then comming to the seuerall parts, she saith, that *his head is as fine gold*. Two names of golde indeede are heere vsed: the first of them signifying fine golde: the other, golde that is purified. Hereby she setteth forth how excellent, how glorious, how rich and shining the head of Christ is. For among earthly thinges, what is comparable to the fine gold? If there be a purpose to signifie somewhat by euery part of the bodie, then by the head of Christ wee may vnderstand the deitie. *I would haue you to know* (saith S. Paule) *that Christ is the head of euerie man, that the man is the heade of the woman, and that God is the head of Christ*. 1. Cor. 11. ver. 3. But I doe not hold it necessary to interpret euerie part, as signifying somewhat,

but onely this, that the Spouse describing Christ, maketh her description according to the parts of the naturall bodie of man, to the ende that it may be knowne, that he is wholly & altogether beautiful, delectable & precious. It was accoũted beautiful in a young man to haue blacke haire, & therfore she saith, *his lockes are curled and blacke as a Rauen.* But what shall we take it that here is any allowance of that ruffianlike wearing of long hayre which is vsed in these daies? No verily, for the Nazarites which according to the lawe of God did weare long haire, did weare it after a most graue and sober manner.

In the next place she doth praise his eyes, sayins, *His eies are as Doues vppon the riuers of waters:* Or thus more plainely, *His eies are as the eies of Doues, which are beside the riuers of waters.* The eye of the doue (as it hath been said before) is a beautifull eye, chaste and single. To the doues eyes therefore she likeneth the eyes of her spouse. And to set out a further cleareneſſe and beautie in them, here is mention of those doues, which are by the riuers of cleere waters, as the doues doe delight. Then further shee saith: *they be washed with milke,* (this is for a further brightnes) *and remaine* (as our translation saith) *by the full vessels.* There is no speech of vessels in the Hebrew text: but thus the words doe stande, *they remaine vpon the fulneſſe.* And here we must know that the worde which hee vseth, which may bee

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called *fulnes*, ſignifieth the holow place in which a precious ſtone is ſet, for the precious ſtones ſet vpon rings, or in rowes vppon the Ephod, had their holow places in which they were cunningly ſet, and ſo were called ſtones of fulnes, becauſe they did in ſo fit ſort fill their holow places. Vnto this ſhe likeneth the eyes of her ſpouſe, ſaying, *that they remaine vpon the fulnes*, that is, they doo like precious ſtones that are ſet moſt cunninglie, fill their holow places. This is a ſpeciall commendation of the eyes in man or woman. For if the eyes doe ſtand foorth too much, it is a deformitie, as if we vſe to ſay, goggle eyed, and likewiſe if they bee ſunke in ſo deepe, that they be then, as we vſe to tearme them, hollow eyed. The Bridegrome is neyther of theſe, his pure eyes are as precious ſtones that are fitlie ſet in their places.

It followeth: *His cheekes are like a bedde of ſpices, and as ſweete flowers*. Touching the latter clauſe, the word is tranſlated *flowers*, doth vſually ſignifie towers: but it hath beene taken here for flowers that grow vp in the beds of ſpices. If wee ſhould expound the wordes then after the vſuall ſignification, we ſhould ſay as the towers of thoſe which make ſweete ointmentes: but wee may more fitlie take them to be the growen plants of thoſe that deale with ſpices & ſweet ointmentes, ſeeing the proper ſignification of the word is of greatnes.

His lippes are like lillies dropping downe pure Myrrhe

Myrrhe. The lillies are faire and ſweete of themſelues, vnto theſe ſhee compareth his lips, adding moreouer that they drop pure myrrhe. This is to bee referred vnto that holy and heauenlie word, which proceedeth out of his mouth. In the commendation of his Church, Chriſt ſayde, that *her lips did droppe as the honey combe*, and now ſhee ſayeth, that *his lippes do drop pure Myrrhe*. It is the ſame word which proceedeth from the mouth of either of them, but not after the ſame maner: for it hath proceeded from him as from the author thereof, it is his owne, it hath the high and ſoueraigne authoritie from him. The Church doth vtter it not as her owne, but as hauing receyued it from him. True it is, that his lips doe drop pure myrrhe onlie to his Spouſe: for the reprobate do cauſe by their obſtinacie, that this worde *which commeth out of his mouth, is vnto them as a ſharpe ſworde, by which they are ſlaine; yea it is a fire that dooth burne them vppe, it doath vexe and torment them*. Reuel. 11. Looke therefore vnto thy ſelfe, if the worde of the Lord bee ſweete and precious vnto thee, euen as the pure myrrhe: if thou take thy ioy and ſolace in it, as the Prophet reporteth of himſelfe in Pſal. 119. then art thou a childe of the Church. The light and power of the heauenly word doth dwell in thee, and thou doeſt obey it. But if it bee bitter vnto thee, becauſe it diſcloſeth the foule wickednes of thy heart, if it torment thee, that thou canſt not abide to heare it,

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but as it is written, thou ſayeſt to the Prophetes, *Prophecie vnto vs pleaſant thinges*, then wofull is is thine eſtate, for thou loueſt darkenes more thē light, becauſe thy workes be euill. It is a neceſſarie thing that euery one looke well into this matter.

The next is, that ſhee ſayeth, *His handes are like rings of gold, ſet with Chryſolite*. It may be thus taken, that vpon hands are rings of gold, ſet with Chriſolite. The maner hath beene and is to weare rings of gold, which are ſet with goodly precious ſtones. The difference is not great whether waye wee take it, eyther that his handes are like thoſe ringes of golde, or that they bee ſo adorned with them. This is the ſenſe, that al is rich and ſhining. The like ſenſe there is in the next words: *His bellie is like white Iuorie, couered with Saphires*; for theſe thinges are beautifull and precious.

It followeth, *His legs are as pillars of Marble ſet vpon ſockets of fine golde, his countenance as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars*. Here is a fitte repreſentation of his legs, by pillars of marble, and ſet vpon ſockets of fine golde and of his ſtature, that he is to looke vppon, as the Cedars of Lebadon. For I doe take it manifeſt, that the countenance is to be referred to his whole ſtature. For it is as it ſhould bee ſaide, looke vppon him and hee is of ſtature goodlie and tall, euen like vnto the high Cedars of Lebanon. His mouth is as ſweete thinges, and hee is wholie delectable

ſtable. Verie well may wee take the wordes thus, the roofe of his mouth is moſt ſweete. As if wee ſhould ſay, there commeth nothing out of his mouth, but that which is ſweete. Yea, ſhee will not ſtand to proſecute euerie parte, but addeth a generall commendation that he is wholie delectable, or moſt to be deſired. From toppe to toe, he is glorious and excellent. Wherefore hauing thus deſcribed him, ſhe concludeth with an exclamation, *This is my welbeloued and this is my Louer O daughters of Ieruſalem.* Hauing ſuch a Louer as this whome ſhee hath deſcribed, hath ſhee not good cauſe to ſeeke after him, yea euen to be ſicke of loue for him? This glorie, theſe riches, this ſweetneſſe of Chriſt is hidden from the world, and this is the reaſon why men do not long after him. Moſt admirable it is, that ſuch treaſures of eternall life and happineſſe are propounded in the Goſpell, and the ſame ſo lightlie eſteemed. But doubtleſſe men cannot eſteeme that they ſee not. *The God of this worlde* (ſayeth Saint Paul) *hath blinded the mindes of the infidels, leaſt the light of the Goſpell of the glorie of Chriſte, ſhould ſhine vnto them, who is the image of God.* 2. Cor. 4. verſe 4. The Goſpell dooth ſhine moſt cleare and bright, the Church as wee ſee here, publiſheth and painteth out Chriſt Ieſus to bee moſt precious, but the deuill is ſo great a Lord in the worlde, he hath ſuch power, hee beareth ſuch ſway, & worketh with ſuch efficacie in the heartes

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of men, that verie few doe behold the light, verie few are brought thus farre, as to imbrace the ſauing health of the Lord. O howe wretched is the ſtate of mankinde, that ſuch a redeemer being publiſhed, cannot bee brought to imbrace him. But the Spouſe dooth well, ſhee goeth on in performing her office: ſhee doth not onely ſeeke after him, euen ſick with loue, and will not with any crueltie be diſmayed, but alſo publiſheth & proclameth openlie, what manner of one hee is: ſhee deſcribeth his riches and his glorie, euen to this end, that ſuch as do not yet know him, may bee moued to ſeeke him, and to enioy his benefites.

Now whereas ſhee hath thus deſcribed her welbeloued, let vs ſee what effect it worketh, for this appeareth by the next words which be theſe: *Whither is thy welbeloued gone, O thou fayreſt among women? Whether is thy welbeloued turned aſide, that wee may ſeeke him with thee?* The daughters of Ieruſalem hearing that hee is ſo goodlie a perſon, are ſtirred vppe and enflamed with a deſire to ſeeke him, this is the effecte which her ſpeech in commendation of Chriſt wrought. And this is a ſingular effect, and ſuch as indeede is to bee reckoned among the chiefe actions vnder heauen that are wrought by men. For if wee doo regarde it firſt, in reſpect of the Lord, what a worthie thing is it to ſpreade the glorie of Chriſt? And then if wee reſpecte men, what a worke of charitie is it to draw men into the waye of Saluation?

tion? Here may the miniſters of the Goſpel learn what their chiefe dutie is: for that which dooth drawe men chiefelie to loue, and to ſeeke after Chriſt, that is their chiefe worke, there are they to imploye all their chiefe force. And you may ſee here that it is the deſcribing of Chriſt, euen the opening and diſplaying of the rich treaſures and graces which bee in him that draweth men to ſeeke him. Who will ſeeke that which he knoweth not? And who will not ſeeke after a precious iewell? Behold therfore how the holy Apoſtles euen Paul and the reſt, doo paint out Chriſt crucified? They doo lay open in him that wee ſhall finde a remedie for all our miſeries. Then are all true paſtors and teachers to be plenteous in publiſhing, and manifeſting the graces and heauenly bleſſinges that be in the Lord Ieſus. For ſo ſhall they draw men effectually to long after him, and to ſeeke him. Here is a deſcription made by the Spouſe, as we haue ſeene but all vnder an Allegorie, for that is according to the whole courſe of this Song. Let the miniſters of God lay open all thinges as plainely as may be: for that ſhal comfort the heartes of the ſimple. Let them declare how *that hee is made vnto vs of God, Wiſedome, righteouſnes, ſanctification, and redemption*, 1. Cor. 1. *Let them open how hee was made the curſe, to deliuer vs from the curſe of the lawe*, Galat. 3. *Yea how hee made him ſinne for vs, that knew no ſinne, that wee in him, might bee made the righteouſ-*

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nes of God, 2. Cor. 5. For theſe thinges being laid open, men will couet with the Apoſtle, Philip. 3. to be found in him, euen as wee ſee how theſe daughters of Ieruſalam doo now earneſtlie enquire whether he is gone, that they may ſeeke him. And marke well how they ſay not ſimplie that wee may ſeeke him, but, that wee may ſeeke him with thee. This is the right way to ſeeke him indeede, this is the onelie way to find him, when anie doo ſeeke Chriſt with the Church. You haue many heretikes, and ſchiſmatikes, which hauing come to ſome knowledge of Chriſt, grow into a pride and diſdaine to ſeeke him with the Church, ſcatter, and will needes ſeeke him by themſelues. But heere is their rewarde, they finde the diuel, they finde not Chriſt. Let vs learne heere to enquire for him of the Spouſe, and to ſeek him with her: for ſo it is ſaide, that we may ſeeke him with thee.

And ſee now what followeth, for the Church maketh anſwer, and telleth them where they ſhall ſeeke him. Her wordes are the beginning of the next Chapter, but more rightlie they are to be added to this chapter. Thus they bee, *My welbeloued is gone down into his garden to the beds of ſpices, that hee may feede in the gardens, and gather the lilies: I am my Welbeloueds, and my welbeloued is mine, who feedeth among the lilies.* Here wee may obſerue diuers pointes, as firſt that ſhe telleth the Chriſt is his garden, among the ſweete Spices

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and delectable flowers, that is to say, he is in his Church. If they will find him, there hee is to bee found, and not any where else, secondly, it is apparant, that although Christ do after a sort withdraw himselfe, so that the Church in great affliction doth seeke him sorrowing, yet she knoweth that he is with her. The faithfull doo feele Christ present, but they doe not feele him in that measure which they doo wish. If it were not so, how could the spouse so crie out after him in seeking and yet tell them that he is in his garden. Here is the consolation of the faithull, that howsoeuer the Lord doth seeme to withdraw and hide away himself from them for a time, yet they be sure hee cannot forsake his Church, and they shall finde him. And for this cause, yee see how shee gloryeth in the next words, of that communion that is betweene her and Christ, *I am* (sayeth shee) *my welbeloueds, and hee is mine, that feedeth among the lilies*. If shee bee his, if shee wholy deuote her selfe to liue vnto him, and to set forth his glorie: (for the faithfull are so to be consecrated vnto him in soule and bodie, as to liue vnto him) and on the other side, if he with all his riches and glorie bee hers, as with assurance of faith shee doth glorie, then how can it be but shee shall finde him? Yea, she hath found him, for the Lord doth enter into all that open vnto him: albeit in their calamities he seemeth to haue hidden himselfe. O what a treasure hath that soule, which with a true and

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liuely faith can ſay, I am the Lords, and the Lord is mine, he feedeth among the lilies, he will feede mee with all ſweete thinges. Let vs make it our whole ſtudie to come to this: for hee that hath Chriſt hath all.

THE ELEVENTH SERMON.

CHAP. VI.

1 *Thou art faire my loue, as Tirzal, comelie as Ieruſalem, terrible as an armie with banners.*

2 *Turne away thine eies from me, for they ouercome me, thine haire is like a flocke of Goates which looke downe from Gielad.*

3 *Thy teeth are like a flocke of ſheepe, which goe vp from the waſhing, which euery one bring out twins, and none is barren among them.*

4 *Thy temples are within thy lockes as a peece of a Pomegranate.*

5 *There are threeſcore Queenes, and foureſcore concubines, and of the Damſels without number.*

6 *But my doue is alone, and my vndefiled, ſhe is the onely daughter of her mother, and ſhee is deere to her that bare her: the daughters haue ſeene her, and counted her bleſſed, euen the Queenes and the concubines, and they haue prayſed her.*

7 *Who is ſhe that looketh forth as the Morning*

ning, faire as the Moone, pure as the Sunne, terrible as an armie with banners?

8 I went downe to the garden of nuttes, to see the fruites of the valley, to see if the vine budded, and if the Pomegranates flourished.

9 I knew nothing, my soule set mee as the chariots of my noble people.

10 Returne, returne, O Shulamite: returne, returne, that wee may behold theee. What shall you see in the Shulamite, but as the companie of an armie?

IN this Chapter, and also in the next the Lorde Iesus doeth giue very great and singular commendations vnto his deere spouse, testifying his loue and heartie affection towardes her. Hauing praised her greatly in the fourth Chapter, it may be demaunded, why hee doth it againe after the same manner, and in diuers things with the same words. In deed this may bee demaunded, least we might imagine that here were a tedious and a needlesse repetition. The truth is, that this commendation is not superfluous but commeth very fitly for the consolation of the spouse. For you haue seene in the beginning of the former Chapter, what a faulte she committed, how vnkindly she dealt with Christ, how he, as displeased, withdrew himselfe, so that she fell into great affliction

on. Shee hath bewailed her offence, ſhee hath ſought after her ſorrowing, and nowe leaſt it might ſeeme that ſhee had by her ſinne, loſt that her former beautie and commendation, yea leaſt there might ſeeme to remaine ſome blot, or that his former liking were diminiſhed, he doth giue her the ſame, or rather greater commendation then before. This in generall is the cauſe why the Lord doth againe commend his Church. And here wee behold the great kindnes of the Lorde Ieſus Chriſt, who doth quite forget all offences committed againſt him, as if they had neuer beene. He doth not ſo much as once vpbraid his ſpouſe with her vnkind dealing, doubtleſſe the faithfull hauing felt and taſted how ſweete the Lord is, being made partakers of his great benefites, when they bee ouertaken with the fleſh, and doo fall into vndutifulneſſe towardes Chriſt, are much diſmayed, fearing that now they cannot be beautifull and deare in his ſight. Now they haue deformed themſelues, how ſhould he loue them? Here is therefore a ſpeciall comfort miniſtred, that they hauing lamented and bewayled their offences, ſeeking after him with an earneſt deſire, trauelling and heauie loaden, he doeth refreſh them, he doth imbrace them, he doth loue them, he doth commend them, and delight in them, euen as if they had neuer delt euill towardes him. What a ſweet Lord is this? What a gracious redeemer haue we? Can any tongue expreſſe the

riches of his grace? Or who is able any way to ſet forth the bountifulneſſe of this Lorde? This ought not to encourage vs to doo euill, that hee quite forgetteth all our offences, as if they had neuer beene done: when we repent and turne vnto him bewayling our tranſgreſsions, and thirſting for his grace: for ſhall his kiudneſſe increaſe our vnkindnes? Shall his loue cauſe her vs to hate him? Shall his weldooing towardes vs be an occaſion that we ſhould diſhonour him? For what elſe doo all they that are emboldened to ſinne, but diſhonour him, hate him, and ſhewe vnkindnes vnto him? Nay his exceeding loue and kindnes muſt worke another effect in vs, and that is to loue him with a vehement loue: for doth not loue require loue againe, and is not kindneſſe to bee rendred vnto kindnes? Take holde of this beloued, let it not depart away from you, the Lord is kinde and mercifull, he is bounteous and long ſuffering, he doth receiue poore ſinners that repent, therefore let vs with our whole heart loue him, let vs honor and obey him. Let it not come nere vs, that his goodnes ſhould make vs naught: I ſpeake it, becauſe there be many, who when they heare that Chriſt is ſo readie to forgiue, doo euen boldly commit all manner of wickedneſſe: for they hope of pardon. This is a moſt vile thing, a thing abhominable, for they do abuſe the graces of God, to their greater condemnation: for the holy Apoſtle vrging and requiring that men

which profeſſe Chriſt, ſhould adorne the doctrine of God our ſauiour, by their godly deedes, addeth this golden ſentence: ſaying, *For the grace of God hath appeared, which bringeth ſaluation vnto all men, teaching vs, that denying vngodlineſſe and worldly luſtes, we ſhould liue ſoberly and iuſtly, and godly in this preſent world:* Tit. 2. verſe 11. 12. If the grace of God hath appeared to this ende, how farre bee they out of the right way, which take occaſion thereby to continue in ſinne? But let vs omitte theſe and come to the words of our text.

Thou art faire my loue as Tirza, comely as Ieruſalem, terrible as an armie with banners. Theſe were two goodly Citties, Tirza, and Ieruſalem, and vnto theſe for beautie and comelineſſe, the bridegroome doth compare his loue. And in the next clauſe he commendeth herterrible fortitude in battell. In the firſt Chapter hee doth liken her to the troupe of horſes in the chariots of Pharaoh. She is ſtrong and prompt to the battaile. And here commending her for the ſame thing, he ſaith, *that ſhee is terrible as an armie with banners.* But vnto whom is her fortitude and valure thus terrible? Surely, euen vnto all her foes, but eſpecially vnto the infernall powers, for hauing put on the whole armor of God, ſhe ſtandeth in the ſpirituall battaile, ſhe reſiſteth and putteth diuels to flight. Thus we ſee, why he ſaith ſhe is terrible as an armie with banners: an armie that is

ſtrong and marcheth with banners or enſignes, is very terrible to their aduerſaries to behold: euen ſo is the ſpouſe vnto the whole armies of diuels: But here we muſt obſerue, that the faithfull ſoule hath not this force of her ſelfe but is ſtrong and terrible in the mightie power of God. And Saint Paule teacheth, that *wee ſtande in that inuincible power of his, by putting on the whole armour of God.* Epheſ. 6. The Church of Rome hath turned all this into an outward ſhew, yea euen into a ridiculous mockerie. For whereas the true Church militant goeth thus armed to the battaile, and is in deed, through the mightie power of God, terrible euen as an armie with banners: they take away the word of God, and ſo depriue them of all the whole armour of God, and in ſtead therof go marching in proceſsion with great high banners vpon poles, as if the diuell were to be fought againſt, or feared with ſuch a ſhew.

Then it is added in the text: *Turne away thine eyes from me, for they ouercome me.* In the fourth chapter he vſed another ſpeech, but to the ſame effect: for when hee ſaid, that ſhee pluckt away his heart with one of her eyes, or that ſhee had with the beautie, ſimplicitie and chaſtitie of her eyes euen wonne his heart, it expreſſeth a moſt vehement affection of loue towards her. Euen ſo in this place the beautie of her eyes doeth affect him in maruellous maner. The ſence is very plain, but the phraſe of ſpeech is not ſo plain: & therefore

fore taken diuers waies. For ſome do take it that he doth not ſay, turne away thine eyes from me: but turne thine eyes towardes mee. For Chriſt doth not meane that the Church ſhould turne the eyes of her faith from him. And then the other clauſe they do expound thus, that they may lift me vp, that is, with conſolation. This doeth highly commend the glorious beautie of faith: and moſt true it is, as Chriſt ſaid before: *My doue that dwelleſt in the clift of the rocke in my hollow place of the ſtaires, ſhewe mee thy face, make mee to heare thy voice, &c.* So heere it is not his meaning, but that ſhe ſhould turne her eyes towardes him, and not turne them away from him: but yet ſurely (as I take it) the words are to be tranſlated thus, *Turne thine eyes from me for they ouercome me.* It is a kind of ſpeech that doth in the higheſt ſort that can bee, expreſſe how much the beautie of her eyes doth delight him. For euen as ſhe ſaid ſhe was ſicke of loue, ſo he ſaith that hee is, as it were ouercome with loue. Doubtleſſe there is not any way to expreſſe a greater liking. Is the beautie then and the glorie of faith (for that is the eye, or rather the eyes of the ſoule) ſo excellent in the eyes of the Lord, and ſhall not wee labour to obtaine ſo precious a gift? O beloued, the more ſtedfaſtly wee truſt in the Lord, the more acceptable it is vnto him, the more we doe glorifie him. Did he not euen wonder at the faith of the Cananitiſh woman, ſaying: *O woman*

great is thy faith, bee it vnto thee euen as thou desirest? Matth. 15. And also Iesus maruelled at the faith of the Centurion, Luke 7. Let vs not hearken to the blasphemous voyce of the Papistes, which affirme that it is arrogancie & wicked presumption for men to assure themselues of the fauour of Christ: and that it is humilitie to bee alwaies in doubt. Indeede because their faith is reposed in their owne workes and merites, they may right well stand in doubt: but all that rest in the promises of GOD, euen in his free mercy in Christ, what cause is there that they should doubt? Is God vntrue of his promise? Yea all they which will not belieue but doubt, doe make God a lier, 1. Iohn 5. which is blasphemous.

It followeth: *Thine haire is like a flocke of Goates, which looke downe to Mount Gilead. Thy teeth are like a flocke of sheepe, which go vppe from the washing, which euerie one bring out twinnes, and none is barren among them. Thy temples are within thy lockes as a peece of a Pomegranate.* I ioyne all these together, because we had them before in chap. 4. and in the very same words, only one word excepted, & that is, that he likeneth her teeth heere, as the word is in this place, to a flock of ewes: and in chap. 4. he calleth them a flock of equall bignes, or as it were cut of equall stature & proportion. I need not stand here againe in exposition, but onely thus much the Lord will haue his Church to know, that vpon her repentaunce,

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her fault is forgotten, he doth not, nor will not ſo much as once vbraid her therewith. This kindnes of our Lord ought we to imitate, which is no eaſie thing vnto fleſh and blood. For let a man ſhew vnkindnes and doe iniurie vnto men, they will not forget it very readily: they will quickly vpbraid, and caſt each other in the teeth. Therefore here is a great vertue to be imitated.

In the words that follow, there is yet a further and a more ample declaration of the glorious beautie and rich decking of the Church. The firſt part of the wordes are thus. *There are threeſcore Queenes, and foureſcore Concubines, and virgines without number.* We reade that King Salomon had ſeuen hundred Queenes, and three hundred Concubines, 1. King. 11. 3. If theſe be the wiues and Concubines of Salomon, which are heere mentioned, then he wrote this ſong before hee did come to haue that former exceſſiue number But it ſeemeth to mee that he doth not ſpeake of Salomons Queenes and concubines, but as if he ſhould ſay, let there be threeſcore Queenes, and foureſcore concubines, and Virgines without number. Or thus, howſoeuer it be that there be many Queenes, and many concubines, with an infinit number of virgins. Queenes are of great dignitie, they bee attyred with coſtly things. And the Kinges in olde time had alſo beſide their Queenes, Concubines: theſe were beatifull and in rich attire, according to the glorie of Princes.

Then

Then alſo the Queenes (as it is the manner) had their maidens of honor to attend vpon them, & likewiſe virgines did wait vpon the Concubines, ſo that here is a very great number of beautifull damſels, which are alſo in goodly attire. Then in a worde, to come to the matter, thus it is, if the Lord ſhould ſay, ſet all the goodly Queenes and Concubines of the great Kings and princes of the world, with all the company of their virgins together, it is a goodly ſhew there is glorie, beauty and riches: but yet they are nothing comparable to my loue, her beautie and glorie farre excelleth them all. For you ſee how he addeth in the next verſe, *but my doue is alone*. How is ſhe alone? She is alone, or ſhe is onely beautiful, rich, and honourable. The birth, or the honor touching the parentage of Queenes, the beautie and decking of Concubines and virgins, is great and highly eſteemed in the eyes of the world: but it is not comparable to the honor, beauty, and rich ornaments of my doue, of my vndefiled, ſhe ſtandeth alone in all excellencie. All theſe Queenes and goodly women come not nigh her in any thing, ſhe is without peere. For let vs conſider euerie particular. It is a thing of great account in the world to bee the daughters of mightie princes, to bee the wiues and concubines of Kinges: but what is the dignitie of this their birth, if you doe compare it with the dignitie and honour of the birth of the Church? It is a ſpiritual birth, yea

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the faithfull bee all borne of God. Then looke howe the Lord God farre excelleth in honor the Kinges of the earth, ſo his children excell their children in dignitie. The princes of this worlde giue a great honor to their children, but they can not giue vnto them the honour of this heauenly birth, the Church only hath it, & therfore he ſaith ſhe is the onely daughter of her mother, deare to her that bare her, or as the word is, pure to her that brought her forth. This it is, *Ieruſalem* (as S. *Paul* ſaith) *which is from aboue, is the mother of vs al*, ſhe is the mother of the whole church vpõ earth: and ſhe is mother vnto none elſe. All that be her children be the children of the moſt High. Thus we ſee how for dignitie and honour in birth, ſhee far excelleth all the Queenes in the world. Then if wee reſpect beautie and rich ornaments, what is all the beautie of the Queenes, the concubines and maidens of honour, and all their gorgeous attire and iewelles, compared with her ſpirituall ornamentes and beautie, euen the rich graces of the holy Ghoſt, by which ſhee is comely in the eyes of God? Behold how honorable and how beautifull they bee in the eyes of God, which are rich in faith. And albeit our blind nature is ſuch, as it is much moued with the pompe and glittering ſhewe of the worlde, and cannot ſee into the glorie and riches of faith, or with what goodly ornamentes it decketh the ſoule, eſpecially in poore men which are in baſe eſtate: yet it pleaſeth

ſeth God ſometimes to make the great ones in the world euen to wonder at the beauty and glorie of his Church. And therefore it is added, the daughters haue ſeene her, & counted her bleſſed, the Queenes and concubines and they praiſed her. Then as I ſay, ſometimes the Lords people, the Lords nation, hath bene ſo honored by God here in the world, euen in the ſight of men, that the very heathē nations haue confeſſed that they were happy, God had done great things for thē. And marke the order here vſed for their praiſe, for hee ſaith firſt, *that the daughters ſawe her, and counted her bleſſed.* Theſe be the virgines that hee ſpake of, which are without number. Theſe virgins do much behold the beauty of the Queenes and concubines, yea they looke alſo vppon their owne rich attire: and they account theſe great things, but ſo ſoone as euer they behold her, ſhe ſo dimmeth all their beautie and glorie, ſo that they ſet their eyes vpon her, and pronounce her bleſſed. Yea, the Queenes and the concubines alſo, which glorie in their owne pompe and dignitie, doe extoll her. For in the next verſe the ſpeech of their wonderment at her is thus expreſſed, *Who is this that looketh forth as the Morning, faire as the Moone, pure as the Sunne, terrible as an Armie with banners.* Here bee foure thinges, by which (as you ſee) they commend her wonderfull beautie. The firſt is the Morning, for they wondring demaund, who is this that looketh

looketh forth as the morning? It is a goodly ſight to ſee howe the bright morning looketh forth. Alſo the Moone, which is the ſeconde, when it is cleare, ſheweth a greate beautie in the night. But the brightnes and purity of the Sunne, vnto which they liken her in the thirde place, is farre beyonde all. And then in the laſt place, they ſay that ſhee is terrible as an armie with banners. This terror as we noted before, is chiefly to the infernal ſpirites, euen the Diuels, againſt whome ſhee is armed with the whole armour of God: but yet theſe alſo do acknowledge a terror and a maieſtie. They that are conuerſant in reading the holy Scriptures can tell, that God hath ſondrie times greatly magnified his church in the eyes of the worlde. Now let vs conſider the whole matter to our owne comfort. How good is our eſtate, how well is it with vs: euen when wee bee poore and baſe, and miſerable in the world, if we be of this number? Wee are not Kinges, wee are not Queenes, we are not great Lords, we are not Ladies, wee are not in wealth, nor in pleaſures: let vs neuer in murmuring ſorte thinke that the Lord hath dealt more hardly with vs, becauſe hee hath not giuen vs theſe: but let vs conſider that he giueth vs the greater, euen the thinges which excell all the glorie of this worlde. Yea, and let Queenes and great Ladies learne here, that their greateſt glorie is not in their parentage, in their beautie, riches and ornaments, but if they be the

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true children of the Church, if they bee regenerate, euen borne of God, and decked with the giftes and graces of the holy Ghoſt: let them, I ſay, learne if they will bee wiſe, to eſteeme this heauenly birth, theſe ſpirituall treaſures & beautie aboue all other. Wee hold it great folly, euen in Kings and Queenes, and in all the great Lordſ and Ladies, if they ſo ſtande vpon the honour os their birth, and doe ſo glorie in their worldly pompe and riches, and are ſo crowned in earthly pleaſures, as they thinke not vppon, nor eſteeme the dignitie of the ſpirituall birth, but ſet light by the heauenly ornamentes: becauſe in ſo doing, they eſteeme very droſſe aboue pure gold. How then can we be excuſed? which hauing but euen as it were ſmall droppes, yea, but the ſcraps, or crummes of theſe worldly things, wherewith Kinges, and Queenes abound, do yet ſo eſteeme them, as that wee looke not after thoſe great thinges, which are beſtowed vppon the Church, for wee eſteeme euen the droſſe of droſſe aboue all. Let therefore this great praiſe which the Lord giueth to his ſpouſe, that ſet all the Queenes and honorable womē in the world together, their dignitie, beautie & rich ornaments are nothing vnto hers, moue vs to ſeeke to bee of that ſocietie. Is not this a worthy thing to be conſidered? Is it not a ſingular comfort? that there is more dignitie, more honour, more true glorie and riches in the ſoule of one poore man or woman, that hath the

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true and liuely faith of Chriſt, then there is in all the Kinges and Queenes of the earth. It may bee obiected, that the glorie of the Kinges is greater then the glorie of the Queenes: then ſeeing the Lord doth meane to commend the dignitie and beautie of his ſpouſe by compariſon, why doeth he not compare her with the higheſt? For anſwer to this, you muſt note that the Church is brought in vnder the perſon of a woman, and therfore ſhe is compared with women. As a Queene ſhe is compared with other Queenes, and ſhe ſtandeth alone in her glorie. Alſo this is to be vnderſtood, that by the Queenes and Concubines & virgins, are meant the nations, kingdomes and prouinces with all their glorie: wherby you may ſee that the higheſt glory of kings and princes is comprehended. We will proceed: *I went downe to the Garden of Nuts, to ſee the fruites of the valley, to ſee if the vine budded, and if the Pomegranates flouriſhed. I knewe not, my ſoule ſet mee as the Chariottes of my noble people.* Hitherto, as you haue ſeene, in this Chapter Chriſt hath highly commended his Church, to this ende as I noted vnto you, that hee had quite forgotten her vnkind dealing towards him, and that there remained no blot of her offence, but all is waſhed away vpon her heartie repentance, and earneſt ſeeking after him. Yet he withdrew himſelfe at the time of her vnkinde dealing: but not for any loathing, but for another purpoſe, as heere now he mentioneth. For this

this is out of doubt that the Lord dooth heere ſpeak to comfort his ſpouſe, and not to mention any thing to vpbraide her withall. He maketh mention of a going downe vnto her, he ſpeaketh of a time paſt, euen that time which is mentioned in the former chapter, when he found her aſleep. The Church is called a garden, *I went downe to the Garden*, ſaith he. And here it is tranſlated, the garden of nuts: being generally ſo taken by the Hebrew Rabbines. The word which they take to ſignifie the nut, is not found elſewhere in all the Scriptures. And ſurely it ſeemeth a ſtraunge maner of ſpeech to ſay, I went downe to the garden of nuts: and then mentioneth not that hee went to ſee the nut trees, but to ſee the fruites of the valley, whether the vine did budde, or pomegranates flouriſhed. They doe but geſſe that the word ſhould ſignifie either nut or nut tree. It is farre more fitte to take it thus, I went downe to the dreſſed garden. For *Egoz*, which is taken to be the nut, may bee deriued of *gazaz*, which ſignifieth to cut or to ſheare. And ſo, as I ſaide, it ſeemeth moſt fit to take it thus: I went downe into the dreſſed garden. For by this ſpeech may be vnderſtood all the coſt and labour which the Lord beſtowed vpon his vineyard, by the handes of his ſeruants the Prophets and Apoſtles, and by the miniſtrie of all other fathfull teachers. Looke where planting, watering, dreſsing, and all maner of labour and coſt is beſtowed, there fruites are expected:

expected: and therefore it followeth, that the Lord went downe to this his garden, to see the fruits of the valley, to see if the vine budded, and if the Pomegranates flourished. Now heere the Spouse faulted: for she was fallen into securitie, and did not bring forth fruites answerable vnto so great graces as were bestowed vpon her. We must needes confesse this, that where much hath beene bestowed, much is required: and yet the faithfull oftentimes which haue had great teaching, daily admonitions, and many giftes of the holy Ghost, doe faile thus farre, that their fruites are but slender. Many complaintes of this you shall finde in the Prophets, and great afflictions for the same. And here the Lord saith, I *did not know*. What did he not know? Not such a flourishing of the plants as ought to haue beene. And here as it seemeth, now after her repentance the speech is mitigated, least hee shoulde seeme to charge her ouer seuerely. For among men things are sometime, which when they doe not flatlie denie to haue beene, they say they knew not. But doth not Christ here vpbraid his Church? No verily, but he mentioneth her fault, to this end that she may bee comforted, by knowing to what end hee seemed to depart after he had raised her out of her sleepe. His affection is great towards her, which dooth cause him to seeke her speedie repentance. He departeth away most swiftly, as he saith: *My soule set mee vpon the Chariots of*

my noble people: or as the word doth ſignifie, *of my franke or willing people*. The willingnes of the minde carieth one ſpeedily. Thus it is then, as if a louer ſhould make all haſte to fetch his friends and companions to acompanie him to meete his ſpouſe, and to behold her comelineſſe and beautie in ſeeking to come vnto him. In the Church, when ſhe hath offended, and doth repent, there is a great glorie of God ſet foorth, and a right ioyfull ſpectacle to the holy Angels of heauen, which doe reioyce when ſinners are conuerted to the Lord.

Therefore in the next words he calleth vpon her to returne. Why, had ſhe not returned? had ſhee not ſought him, confeſsing and bewayling her offence? Yes: He doth not vtter this ſpeech vnto her now: *Returne, returne, O Shulamite, returne, returne, that wee may looke vppon thee*: for what needed this vehement calling of her to repentance now, when ſhe had ſo earneſtly ſought him? But he mentioneth how he called vpon her when ſhe refuſed to open vnto him. She is called the Shulamite of Ieruſalem, which was called *Shalem*, the name being deriued from peace: for the Church is at peace with God. Hee ſaid, *Returne, returne, and wee will looke vpon thee*. Euen he with his companions. And then to ſtir vp the ſame his companions to behold the beautie and glorie of her comming, he ſaith: *What ſhall you ſee in the Shulamite?* and addeth, *as the com-*

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panie of *Machanaim*. The worde ſignifieth the companies or tentes of two armies that meete. When Iaakob returned from Laban, as you may reade, Geneſ. 32. verſ. 1. the Angels of God met him, and when Iaacob ſaw them, he ſaid, *This is Gods hoſte*, and called the name of the ſame place *Machanaim*. Vnto this ioyfull meeting of thoſe two armies, the Angels on the one part, and Iaakob with his companions on the other, the Lord doth liken the returning of his Spouſe vnto him: he with his holy Angels being one Armie, and ſhe with her companie an other. A moſt ioyfull meeting, a glorious ſight. Surely we are fallen a ſleepe, and I ſuppoſe that before the Lord depart, and we be afflicted, we will not awake to ſeeke him.

THE TWELFTH SERMON.

Chap. VII.

1 *How beautifull are thy goings with ſhoes, O princes daughter? the ioints of thy thighes are like iewels, the worke of the hands of a cunning workman.*

2 *Thy nauell is as a round cup that wanteth not licour: thy bellie is as an heape of wheat compaſſed about with lillies.*

3 *Thy two breaſtes are as two young Roes that are twins.*

4 *Thy necke is as a tower of Iuorie: thine eyes are like the fiſh pooles in Heſhbone, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy noſe is as the tower of Lebanon, that looketh toward Damaſcus.*

5 *Thine heade vppon thee is as ſcarlet, and the buſh of thine heade like purple: the King is tied in the rafters.*

6 *How faire art thou, and how pleaſant art thou, O my loue in pleaſures?*

7 *This thy ſtature is like a Palme tree, and thy breaſtes are like cluſters.*

8 I ſaid, I will go vp into the palme tree, I will take holde of her boughes: thy breaſtes ſhall now bee like cluſters of the vine, and the ſauour of thy noſe like apples.

9 And the roofe of thy mouth like good wine, which goeth ſtraight to my welbeloued, and cauſeth the lips of the ancient to ſpeake.

HEre is another commendation of the Church by her ſeueral partes. If you demaund why this is, ſeeing here is no ſpeech of the Church, nor nothing that hath fallen out betweene the former commendation and this. Here is a new occaſion for all that of praiſing the ſpouſe. For as I noted, the former was for to cõfort her, and to raiſe her vp after her affliction and ſorrow, by aſſuring her that ſhe was euen as precious and beautifull in his eyes, as ſhe was before her vnkinde dealing. And now hauing ſhewed that his withdrawing himſelfe was for her good, euen to call her by a moſt ſerious repentance, this calling did take effect, ſhe did returne vnto him, and now this commendation which is from the feet to the head, ſheweth how comely and delectable ſhe was in her repentance, or in her returning vnto him. We may learne then how pleaſant a thing it is in the eyes of the Lord, when his people that haue ſtepped awry & gone

aſtray, doe returne vnto him by vnfained repentance. But let vs come to the wordes of the text. *How beautifull are thy goings with ſhooes, O Princes daughter?* The word is, *thy goinges, or thy treadings, or thy ſteppes or thy feete.* The ſence in deed commeth all to one, whether wee take it of the feete, or of the treadings: for the beautie of the feete, is in the right ſteppes. Here therefore by a word of admiration or wonderment is ſet forth how exceeding comely and beautifull her feete and ſteps be: for he ſaith, *How beautifull are thy goinges?* When men depart away from the Lord, their ſteps be vnſeemely, their wayes be crooked waies, euen ſuch as the Lord God doth abhorre. But the Church ſeeking after Chriſt, in ſuch ſorte as you haue ſeene before, and approching neere, and neerer vnto him, her ſteps, her treadings, her feete and all her waies are maruellous beautifull in his eyes. And is chiefly here to be noted, that he doth mention her ſhoes, Our tranſlation ſaith, *How beautifull are thy goinges with ſhooes*: but more fully to expreſſe the ſence, and accordiug to the very wordes, we are to tranſlate it thus: How beautifull are thy ſteps, or thy feete with thoſe ſhoes? For there is (as I may call it) the note of the demonſtratiue particle. They bee in deed a ſpeciall kinde of ſhooes, which ſhe had now on, which make her feete and goinges ſo beautifull. You will demaund what ſhoes bee theſe? And I

doe demaund what bee the ſhooes which the holy Apoſtle willeth the faithfull to bee ſhod withall. Epheſ. 6. You know hee ſaith, *your feete being ſhod,* and then he nameth with what ſhoes, ſaying, *with the preparation of the Goſpell of peace,* verſ. 15. The bride had now got on theſe ſhoes, her feet were ſhodde with the preparation of the Goſpell of peace. The Goſpell is the meſſage of peace, and reconciliation betweene God and the worlde, aſſuring all thoſe of true bleſſedneſſe which come vnto him: this dooth prepare and arme their feete to goe through all the difficulties of the way, which are verie many, and very ſharpe. For he that hath once receyued the faith and vndoubted hope of the promiſes of the Goſpell, what difficultie in the way ſhall keepe him backe? True it is, that the Deuill doth make the way exceeding rugged & painfull to diſcourage, but the bride is ſo ſhod that ſhe doth not ſhrinke, but treadeth downe all. And this is that which is ſo pleaſant in the eyes of the Lord. In her carnall ſecuritie, when ſhee was on ſleepe, and hee with moſt louing ſpeeches called vpon her to open vnto him, her feete were not ſo well ſhodde: for then, *I haue put off my coate, how ſhall I put it on? I haue waſhed my feete how ſhall I defile them?* Then euerie little matter in her way did withhold: but now, let there bee what dangers, what enemies ſoeuer or difficulties, ſhe will through,

and ſhe will not giue ouer vntill ſhe finde him. And vpon this he cryeth out: *How beautifull are thy goinges with thoſe ſhooes, O princes daughter?* When men walke in their owne wayes, their ſteps are not good in the ſight of the Lord, howſoeuer men think highly of their owne inuentions: but when the Goſpel doth prepare their feet to ſeeke the Lord, that is acceptable. Let vs then (beloued) get on theſe ſhooes, which ſhall make our feete and our treadings ſo beautifull in the ſight of the Lord. And which wil alſo make vs ſo honourable in his ſight, which he expreſſeth in the next words ſaying, *O princes daughter.* The Church is a moſt honorable virgin, fit by her parentage and birth, to bee the wife of ſo great a king: for ſhe is the daughter of the prince of al princes, ſeeing all the faithfull are borne of God. In deede there is no worldly birth nor parentage of that dignitie to make a meet ſpouſe for Chriſt, for what are men in themſelues: but the heauenly birth, which is not of the will of man, but of God, is of moſt high dignitie. The ſoule which is borne of God, is neerely ioyned vnto Chriſt, for the regeneration is in Chriſt. Therefore (I ſay) ſeeke true repentance, which is a moſt precious iewell.

It followeth: *The ioynts of thy thighes are like iewels, the worke of the hands of a cunning workeman.* Here alſo is a word not found elſewhere in the Scriptures. It is tranſlated in our Engliſh, *the*

ioynts

ioynts. The word doth ſignifie turnings, or things that doe compaſſe about. It may in deed bee referred to the ioynts, or it may bee taken for the girdle. For it was the manner that the bride did weare a girdle of goodly rich and coſtly iewels. And here they are likened vnto iewels made by a cunning workman. Then he compareth the nauell to a round cup that wanteth not liquour. A childe in the wombe of his mother, receyueth his nouriſhment by the nauell: here is compariſon therefore of a cup that hath alſo in it for nouriſhment.

Then hee ſaith, that *her bellie is as an heape of wheate, compaſſed about with lillies.* Here is fruitfulneſſe repreſented by the heape of wheate; and here is pleaſant ſweetnes reſembled by the lillies. Her two breaſtes are compared as before in this Song. I will not ſtand againe vpon any interpretation. *Her necke is as a tower of Iuorie.* This compariſon doth not much differ from that former, where he ſaith, *Thy necke is as the tower of Dauid built for an armorie*: ſauing that there hee reſpecteth force, making mention of the ſhieldes of the mightie, and here the tower is of precious matter, and of a faire colour, the iuorie being a cleere white.

Thine eyes are as the fiſh pooles in Heſhbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Theſe were pooles of goodly cleere and pure water, at that gate in Ieruſalem

Ieruſalem by which the greateſt concourſe of people was entring in and going out, for which cauſe the gate is called *Bath-rabbim*. *Bath* is as much as to ſay the daughter, and *rabbim*, is of many.

Thy noſe is as the Tower of Lebanon, that looketh toward Damaſcus. This was a goodly Tower in the houſe which Salomon built in the forreſt of Lebanon. Here are the gōodlieſt and the ſtatelieſt thinges vppon earth brought in to reſemble the Spouſe. *Thine head vppon thee*, or as ſome doe take it, *in thine head*, that which is vpon thee, referring it to the attire of her head, *is like skarlet, and the buſh of thine heade like purple.* The worde *dallath*, ſignifieth that which is made ſmall or ſlender: wherefore ſome take it for tht hayre of the head, for the ſmalneſſe of them, and ſome for the laces that bindeth vp the haire. The matter is not great, but in the next clauſe there is ſome difficultie. *The King is tyed in therafters*, ſayth our Engliſh tranſlation. What meaneth that? That the King is affected to be neere his Spouſe, and to behold her beautie and comelines. Some doe expound it thus: A king would be tyed in his galleries. As if he ſhould ſay, there is not any king that walketh in the middeſt of his glorie, euen in his goodly galleries: but if he ſhuld behold thy beautie and glorie, it woulde cauſe him to ſtand amazed, hee woulde no more looke

vpon

vppon his owne glorie but vppon thine, ſo farre doth thine excell all the glorie of this worlde. Surely eyther of theſe doeth highly commende the beautie of the Church. If Chriſt bee tyed in the galleries to beholde her, or if an earthly king woulde ſtande amaſed at the ſight of her beautie; then doth it farre ſurmount all the glorie and riches of this worlde. There bee others that haue taken it thus. *Thy buſh of haire is like the purple of a king hanged or tyed in the galleries.* The diſtinguiſhing accent gainſayeth this: but it ſeemeth to bee the moſt natiue ſence of the wordes. The galleries and large roomes of kinges were hanged with goodly hanginges of purple, or of ſome ſuch rich ſtuffe: vnto theſe hanginges the haire of the Spouſe may bee compared. Euery way it ſetteth forth the comelineſſe and beautie of the ſpouſe, and therefore not much materiall which ſence wee follow. Well, the bridegroome hauing thus praiſed the beauty and comelineſſe of his ſpouſe by ſeuerall partes: now hee doth breake foorth into an admiration and great wonderment at her beautie in the whole, or in all laide together, ſaying: *Howe faire art thou, and how pleaſant art thou, O my loue in pleaſures?* This is brought in vppon all thoſe former particulars: and therefore the wordes doe ſtand thus for the ſence: *O loue*, or *O my loue how faire art thou, and howe pleaſant art*

art thou in euerie reſpect, or, *in all partes*, or rather, *in all theſe heaped vp in one*? For as wee ſee, hee hath gone by particulars from the foote to the head. Firſt, How *beautifull are thy goinges with ſhooes, O princes daughter*? Then, *the ioyntes of thy thighes are as iewelles, the worke of the handes of a cunning workeman*. After this, he ſpeaketh of the nauell, which hee likeneth to a rounde cup, that wanteth not liquor. Alſo her bellie is compared to an heape of wheate compaſſed about with hilles. Her two breaſtes are as two young Roes that are twinnes. And ſo hee aſcendeth, and ſaith, her necke is as a tower of iuorie: her eyes like the fiſh-pooles of Heſhbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Her noſe as the tower of Lebanon, that looketh towarde Damaſcus: her head like Skarlet, and her hayre like the purple of a King hanged in the galleries. In ſumme her beautie is wonderfull in all partes: ſhe is comely throughout. Wee ſee beautie and comelineſſe in men and women oftentimes, but not in all partes alike: for ſometime a beautifull, a comely and pleaſant face, but not ſo comely a bodie. Or a comely bodie, but not ſo well fauoured a face. Or if face and bodie bee comelie, yet ſome defect in one part or other. This is not ſo in the Church of Chriſt: for ſhe in euery part is beautifull, delectable, and full of glorie.

More-

Moreouer, that Christ dooth speake of her beautie in way of wonderment, it is from the heaping vp all those particulars together (as I said) in one. For where there bee many goodly things, and euery one by it selfe to bee wondered at for beautie, how much may they bee wondered at when they come all together to bee heaped vp in one? Take it thus, the Lorde doth bestow many goodly thinges vppon his Church, hee doeth decke her with many rich ornaments, euery one of these is to bee wondered at for excellencie, then how much more when they come all together? But here is an other circumstance that dooth augment the matter: and that is from the person of him that hath her beautie in admiration. It is the Lorde Iesus who doth wonder at her beautie: hee can not wonder at a meane thing. Lay all the glorie of kinges before him, and it is but drosse, hee cannot wonder thereat: for what is it to the glorie which hee dooth inherite and dwell in? What is the glorie and beautie of the Sunne, the Moone and the Starres vnto him? Dooth hee wonder at them? Surely hee wondereth at the beautie of his Church; howe excellent then is her beautie and glorie? They bee rare things that Princes vppon earth doe wonder at: most rare which the king of kinges hath in admiration. O ten times happie are they, which shall

ſhall bee partakers of ſo great glorie. But may ſome men ſay, where is that companie in the world which is ſo goodly to beholde? Wee ſee in all Churches that baſeneſſe and ſimplicitie which the world deſpiſeth. Wee ſee alſo many deformities, and ſpots of ſinne in the beſt. In a word, we can ſee no matter of wonder, vnleſſe it bee this, that wee may wonder howe Chriſt ſhould deeme her ſo beautifull. I doe aunſwere vnto this, that men are blinde in diſcerning the beautie and excellencie of ſpirituall ornamentes. Alſo they be malignant, and for ſome deformities deſpiſe and depraue very excellent thinges. Yea but Chriſt ſpeaketh as if all were beautifull. That in reſpect of the full beautie and glorie which hee will put vppon his ſpouſe. For herein the Lorde beholdeth her, as hee will make her to himſelfe a glorious Church, not hauing ſpotte or wrinckle. There is in the faithfull that which is beautifull and pleaſant in the eyes of the Lorde, euen the manifolde giftes and graces of his Spirite: but the beautie which hee ſo highlie commendeth, and wondereth at, is rather in that which ſhee ſhall bee, which hee nowe beholdeth.

But what meaneth this, that hee doeth not onely call her his loue, but his loue in pleaſures, in delightes, or in the thinges which wee eſteeme

esteeme as dainties? Surely this doth much augment the matter, this is a very forcible speech to declare his exceeding affection towards her. We knowe men doe loue thinges, and take delight, but there bee degrees in their loue: they may loue things very well, yet that is the highest when they take their chiefe pleasure and delight in that which they loue. So Christ sheweth here, that he taketh delight and pleasure in his faire spouse, she is euen a dearling and a daintie vnto him. They be much deceiued then which suppose that Christ maketh but as it were a common account of his Church.

Then hee addeth, *This thy stature is like the Palme tree, and thy breastes like clusters.* The Palme tree is of stature tall and straight, she is resembled thereby. Also they say, that it is the nature of that tree, not to bee pressed downe with waight, but groweth vp the more. Surely the holy spouse is not bowed downe, nor made crooked by waight and burthen of afflictions. But wee shall see afterward how he prosecuteth this comparison, in which he doth liken her to the Palme tree, what a promise hee maketh vnto her, and what a blessing doth followv from the same.

And novv that hee saith, *her breastes are like clusters*, it is to bee vnderstoode (as it seemeth

meth by the next verſe) of the cluſters of the vine, a ſweete and a wholeſome fruite, and ſo the breaſtes of the Church, by which ſhee nouriſheth all her children, are repleniſhed with very ſweete milke. Wee haue ſpoken of this before, what the breaſtes are, and what that ſincere milke is, by which the faithfull are nouriſhed. The truth is, that albeit the teſtamentes bee the Lordes, and not the worde or doctrine of man, yet they are thus farre become the breaſtes of the Church, that none can ſucke from them the wholeſome nouriſhment, vnleſſe hee take them as her breaſtes. I meane thus: Some will ſay, the worde is the Lordes, wee are not to reſpect men: and ſo they will ſeeme to haue the vſe and benefite of the worde of God, to giue them life, ro nouriſh and feede them: but they deſpiſe the Church, they condemne her, and ſeperate themſelues from her. Theſe can haue no ſaluation by the worde of GOD, though they haue it in their handes and reade it: for the Lord hath made it the wholeſome foode of life, as it commeth out of the breaſtes of the Church. Let vs then take heede, leaſt with Schiſmatikes, Heretikes and ſectaries, wee ſeparate not our ſelues from her that hath theſe breaſtes, and which alone doeth bring forth and nouriſh vppe children to God.

Now

Now followeth a promiſe of the dreſsing this palme tree, and a declaration of the fruitfulneſſe that ſhall ſpring from the ſame dreſsing. The promiſe is in theſe wordes: *I haue ſaide I will goe vppe into the Palme tree, I will take hold of her boughs.* The declaration of the fruitfulneſſe is in theſe wordes: *and thy breaſtes ſhall nowe bee like the cluſters of the vine, and the ſauour of thy noſe like apples. And the roofe of thy mouth like good wine, which goeth ſtraight to my welbeloued, and cauſeth the lippes of the auncient to ſpeake.* Touching the former of theſe, that is the promiſe which Chriſt maketh of dreſsing his Church, the ſpeech is framed according to the maner of dreſsing the palme trees: for hauing compared her to a palme tree, he continueth the allegorie. The husbandmen when they did dreſſe and trim their palme trees, went vp into them, and ſo laid hold of euerie bough to dreſſe the ſame. According to this, the Lord ſaith heere, *I haue ſaid*, that is, I haue decreed, I haue promiſed, and will performe it, that I will goe vp into the Palme tree, and I will lay hold of her boughs. Which then you ſee, is as much as to ſay, I will dreſſe my palme tree. For the Lord doeth beſtow all maner of dreſsing and trimming of his church, to make her fruitful. And this wanteth not effect: for hee declareth how fruitfull and how exceeding ſweete ſhe ſhall become by this dreſsing. Firſt hee ſaith, *her breaſts ſhall bee as cluſters of the vine.* Hee ſaide, that

they were like cluſters before, and now they ſhall be more. It may be ſaid: how can that bee, are not her breaſts alwaies the ſame? is not the word of God in the Teſtaments alwaies one? it is alwaies one and the ſame: but the Church dooth miniſter the worde as it were out of her breaſtes more aboundantly, and in more excellent maner then at another. Her breaſtes then are alwaies like cluſters of the vine, there is in them a right holſome and ſweete iuyce: but when the Lorde powreth forth vpon her the greateſt meaſure of his ſpirit, then doth ſhe in moſt plenteous maner draw forth her breaſtes, and miniſter food vnto her children. The Church of Rome hath remoued away the ſincere milke of Gods worde from her children, bearing them in hand that it is no better then poyſon: and ſhe draweth foorth other breaſts, which are full of the ſwill and dregs of her owne inuentions, and with the ſame ſhee dooth nouriſh, or rather kill and murder. Let vs earneſtly craue of the Lorde, that in theſe our daies he will goe vp into his palme tree, and lay hold on her boughes, that ſo her breaſts may be as cluſters of grapes, yea that the heauenly doctrine may bee ſincerely and plenteouſly vttered. There bee many that holde the places of Paſtors which be like drie nurſes. There be that handle the word ſo as it doth little good to the hearers.

Let vs proceede: hee ſaith, *And the ſauour of thy noſe like apples.* Men doe vſually breath at their

their noſe: then this is to declare that the Church ſhall breath out nothing but ſweetnes. All that approch neere vnto her, ſhall ſmell the ſauour of her ſweete breath. Let vs well conſider of this, euen to trie our ſelues whether wee bee of the Church: for many doe boaſt and brag that they be true children of the Church, which yet breath out nothing but a ſtinking breath. Yea their breath is ſo loathſome to all that can ſmell, that it cannot be endured. Are theſe then of the church? Is the ſauour of their noſe as the ſauor of apples?

Laſtly he ſaith: *And the roofe of thy mouth like good wine, &c.* The roofe of the mouth is here put for that which proceedeth out of the mouth. And if any ſhall demaunde, what is that which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Church? I anſwere it is the holy word and doctrine of the Lord, which ſhe doth profeſſe and publiſh. This liuely worde is here likened vnto good wine, which is deſcribed in the latter part of the verſe, by the propertie and by the effect. Our Engliſh tranſlation for the one ſayth, *it goeth ſtraight to my welbeloued*: and for the other, that *it cauſeth the lips of the auncient to ſpeake*. The words ſtande thus, going to loues, to rightneſſes, which may rightly in the phraſe of our tongue bee ſaid, mouing it ſelfe in moſt louely manner, & moſt rightly. For ſo doth the mightie ſtrong wine moue it ſelfe when it is powred into the cup. And then for the latter clauſe, that it maketh to ſpeake the

lips of the ancient. *Iashan* in the Hebrew dooth ſignifie to ſleepe, and to waxe olde. Hereupon ſome ſay it cauſeth the ancient to ſpeake. Which is no ſmall effect, ſeeing men that are very olde haue their ſences dulled, and are verie ſlow to ſpeake. The mightie wine doth moue & quicken the dull ſpirits, euen of the aged. Or as others do take it, that it cauſeth the lips of them that be aſleepe to ſpeake. That is more, yea if we conſider it in the ſimilitude, it is hyperbolicall: but in the thing repreſented, that is the preaching of the Goſpell, it is moſt true. For thus it is, the word which proceedeth from the mouth of the church is as ſtrong wine that moueth and quickneth the dull ſpirits, not onely as it were in men whoſe ſences are dulled with age, but euen in thoſe that be aſleepe, yea in a dead ſleepe of ſinne. It raiſeth and quickeneth ſuch, it cauſeth their lips to ſpeak the praiſes of God, which before had no power that way. O beloued, if we be not in a dead ſleep, yet to ſpeake holy things, to ſpeake to the praiſes of the Lord, and edification of our brethren, we are as old men: let vs receiue this ſtrong wine from the mouth of the Church, which may quicken our ſpirits.

THE

THE THIRTEENTH SERMON.

CHAP. VII.

10 *I am my Welbeloueds, and his desire is towards mee.*

11 *Come my Welbeloued, let vs goe foorth into the field, let vs remaine in the villages.*

12 *Let vs get vp earlie to the vines, let vs see if the vine flourish, whether it hath budded the small grape, whether the Pomegranates flourish, there will I giue thee my loue.*

13 *The mandrakes haue giuen a smell, and in our gates are all sweete things newe and olde: my welbeloued I haue kept them for thee.*

CHAP. VIII.

1 *O that thou were as my brother, that sucked the breastes of my mother: I would finde thee without, I woulde kisse thee, then they shoulde not despise me.*

2 *I will leade thee, and bring thee into my mothers house: there shalt thou teach mee: I will*

cauſe thee to drinke ſpiced wine, and new wine of the Pomegranate.

3 His left hand ſhall be vnder mine head, and his right hand ſhall imbrace me.

4 I charge you, O daughters of Ieruſalem, that you ſtirre not vp nor wake my loue, vntill ſhe pleaſe.

WE haue heard the great prayſe and commendation which Chriſt giueth to his Spouſe: firſt to comfort her, by letting her vnderſtand for certaintie that the blotte of her offence was vtterly taken away, her comelines and beautie was no leſſe in his eyes then before: and ſecondly, that it may appeare what a glorious thing in the ſight of God true repentance is. Moreouer in the laſt place, wee haue ſeene the promiſe of the Lord, what he would do for his Church, and how fruitfull, ſweete and precious ſhee ſhould become thereby. Now the Church anſwereth, expreſsing at large her affection and dutie towardes Chriſt: that ſeeing his kindnes had bin ſo great towards her, ſhe doth euen as it were dedicate, vow, and conſecrate her ſelfe and all that ſhe hath vnto him, haſting in deſire, and longing for the day of the mariage. Heere is no more alteration in the Church: but as the ſong began with her great deſires of Chriſt, ſo it endeth. For howſoeuer the faithfu

faithful doe ſlippe and fall, ſwarue and go aſtray for a time, yet they riſe againe, they returne into the right way.

But let vs come to her wordes, *I am my welbelouedſ, and his affection is towardes mee.* The coniunction may more rightly be taken thus, ſeeing or becauſe his affection is towards me. For in the former clauſe of the ſentence ſhe profeſſeth and voweth her ſelfe and all that ſhee hath wholly to Chriſt, ſaying, *I am my welbelouedſ:* and in the other clauſe ſhe rendreth a reaſon, ſaying, *becauſe his affection is towardes mee.* His kindneſſe then towards her wrought this effect, that ſhee and all hers ſhall be dedicated to him. The cauſe goeth before the effect, and therefore let vs firſt ſpeake of that. For the ſumme of her ſpeeche cõmeth to this much in effect: ſeeing my Spouſe hath ſet his affection ſo vpon me, & freely loued me when I was vtterly turned away from him, when I was his enemy Rom. 5. When I was dead in ſinnes and treſpaſſes, Epheſ. 2. When I had nothing in me but that which was vncleane and abhominable, Rom. 3. Moreouer, ſeeing his affection towards me is ſo conſtant, that hauing redeemed me, called and ſanctified me with his ſpirite, garniſhing and decking mee with his heauenly giftes and graces, and I ſhewing my ſelfe vnkind and very vndutiful towards him, defiling and deforming my ſelfe, yet his loue continueth one, he doth forgiue me, he doth imbrace me, he doth ac

compt me as faire and precious, as if I had neuer ſinned againſt him: Is there not cauſe that I ſhould wholly be his? No man can deny the reaſon of this. Such aboundant loue doeth craue loue againe. And now conſider what it is, when ſhee ſaith, *I am my welbeloueds*. For though it be ſet firſt, yet it dependeth (as I ſaid) vpon the latter. If ſhe be his, then ſhe is not her owne. She is not to liue to her ſelfe, or to the fleſh, but vnto Chriſt. This is it that Saint *Peter* ſaith, *that henceforth wee ſhould liue not after the luſtes of men, but after the will of God*. 1. Pet. 4. verſ. 2. This is when the faithfull doe loue, obey and honor the Lord, for if they doe not loue him, how are they his? If they doe not obey him, how doe they loue him? This ſaith Saint *Iohn, is the loue of God, if we keepe his commandementes*. 1. Iohn 5. And if men breake the commandementes, and liue in euill vices, how doe they honour the Lord? You ſee therefore howe the Church ſaith, *I am my welbeloueds*. The whole man both bodie and ſoule is conſecrated to Chriſt. Here we may ſee plainely, that ſuch as walke in wickedneſſe, neuer feele the louing kindnes of the Lord. They haue not the true & liuely faith. For this is faith, when the ſoule feeleth aſſuredly that Chriſt hath ſet his affection vpon her, he hath redeemed and ſanctified her, he wipeth away all her ſpottes, and healeth all her infirmities. Though ſhe offend, yet his loue and kindnes doth remaine. Now from the

the feeling of this, it cannot be, but the ſoule is euen rauiſhed with loue towardes him, and giueth vppe her ſelfe to doe that which may delight and pleaſe him. So that, as I ſaid, ſuch as leade a wicked life, neuer felt the loue and kindneſſe of the Lord, they neuer had the true and liuely faith. Beloued, if any man be deſirous to be Chriſtes, that is to ſay, if he will loue, obey and honour him: if he will not liue to himſelfe but to the Lord: here is the head and the fountaine, when ſhee ſayeth, *I am my Welbeloueds, becauſe his affection is towardes mee*: let him firſt apprehend the loue and affection of Chriſt. For that loue of Chriſte (as S. Paule ſpeaketh) will conſtraine him to loue againe. And before a man do feele that God hath loued him, hee may as it were force himſelfe to ſpeake and doe good thinges, but they cannot be acceptable, for they doe not proceede from a franke and free heart, they ſpring not from loue. What is it, when a man eyther of a ſeruile feare, or from ſome ſiniſter reſpect doth abſtaine from that which is euill, if his heart within do loue and delight in it? Or what good doth he, which outwardly with his hands perfourmeth ſome good deedes which his heart delighteth not in? And now behold how forward and readie the Bride is to performe her dutie, and to haue the day of the mariage approach. Shee is not the woman that ſhee before was in the fifte Chapter, where ſhee made excuſes and woulde not ariſe to open to Chriſt:

Chriſte, for now ſhee calleth vnto him, ſaying, *Come my welbeloued, let vs goe foorth into the field, let vs lodge in the villages*, or as it may bee tranſlated, at the Cyprus trees. :The Lorde did promiſe in the former Chapter, that hee would goe vppe into the palme tree and take holde of her boughes, hee would dreſſe his Church, and ſhee ſhould thereupon become moſt flouriſhing, fruitfull and delectable, vnto this ſhe offereth her ſeruice. It is vnto this, for it could bee no prayſe in her to moue him vnto any thing which hee had not promiſed, She doth not name the palme tree but Cyprus trees, and the Vines: but the matter is all one, ſeeing the Church is reſembled by the one as well as by the other. Then thus it is, the Lorde promiſeth to dreſſe and trim his Church, ſhee offereth her ſelfe moſt cheerefull and willing thereunto. Hee will beſtowe his rich graces and giftes vpon her, and ſhee is euen on thirſte for them. It becommeth all the faithfull, when the Lorde promiſeth his graces & heauenly bleſſings to ſhewe themſelues forwarde and ready to receiue them, and to put to all their care and diligence, that their heartes may bee ſanctified and purged tyat ſo they may bee fit to bring foorth ſweete fruites. The Lorde doth call them to ariſe from the delight of theſe earthly thinges, and to ſet their affection on thinges that bee aboue: ſo the Bride here offereth her ſelfe to goe forth into the fieldes, and euen to lodge among the Ciprus trees,

trees, that ſhee may riſe vp earely in the morning to goe to the Vines. Shee is now ſo rapt with the loue and deſire of heauenly things, that her mind & her affections are carried out of the world, ſhe will now euen lodge in a continuall meditation and delight of them, yea ſhee wil dayly raiſe vppe herſelf earely to behold the fruit that doth ſpring from them. This is a maruailous good eſtate and right commendable, that ſhe is now in. Before this, ſhe was laide downe on ſleepe in her bed, ſhe was loath to be raiſed vp. Behold here the difference of the godly after their afflictions, from that they were when worldly eaſe and proſperity had taken holde on them. Then the giftes of the ſpirite lie as it were buried, and all groweth euen as it were ruſtie: but when the fierie triall commeth, when they be caſt as golde into the furnace the droſſe is burned out, they ſhine bright, they bee raiſed vp and quickened. Theſe things (I ſay) we may beholde in her forwardnes, ouer that ſhe was in the fift Chapter. This may teach vs all to feare our ſelues in our long proſperity that wee haue enioyed here in this our land. We haue had it ſo long, that we do ſcarſe thinke of afflictions: and greately it is to bee deſired that ſuch peace might ſtill continue, ſo it might not bee to our great harme. But hath not proſperitie euen drawen the heartes of the moſt which profeſſe the Goſpell, into carnall ſecuritie? Doe we now ſay (as the Bride here) *Come my Welbeloued, let vs goe*

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out into the fielde, let vs lodge among the Ciprus trees, let vs rise vppe earlie to the vines: let vs see if the vine flourish, &c. Are wee thus ready and forward vnto the search and imbracing of spirituall and heauenly graces? Are wee so delighted with them, as to make them our meditation night and day, and so as it were euen to lodge in them? Are our affections so fixed and set, that wee doo euen ioy to beholde the fruites of righteousnes? Nay rather, is not euery man almost fallen on sleepe, and doth not the minde euen lodge in the desires of these earthly thinges? Is not the whole care and studie how to heape vp gold and siluer, how to get lands and possessions? Shall the Lorde let vs alone in this estate? Whether will wee fall? whether will wee runne? how greate is the complaint that is dayly vttered euerie where, against the couetousnes of those that should bee lightes, and guides vnto others? The Lorde calleth and knocketh dayly, to haue vs open vnto him. And if we count it a good thing to enioy still our worldly peace and prosperity. Let vs cheerefully and willingly rise vp, let vs offer our selues to goe into the fielde, to lodge among the sweete thinges. Doubtles there is great hope, if wee raise vp our mindes to doe as the holy Spouse here dooth, we shall enioy still all good thinges. If not, wee shall haue some great afflictions to raise vs vp, for the Lorde will not suffer his Church to goe to vtter ruine. It is best for vs (if wee coulde wisely consi-

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der of it) and moſt for our eaſe to doe that which the Spouſe doth here, before affliction come: for then we ſhall preuent it, and turne it away. And now beholde how ſhee doth proceed in this matter, longing for the daye of the mariage. *Let vs riſe vp earlie to the vines, let vs ſee if the vine flouriſh, whether it hath budded the ſmall grapes: there will I giue thee my loue.* The flouriſhing of the vine, budding of the ſmall grape, and likewiſe of the Pomegranates, are the fruites of the graces of God in the aſſemblies, & the ſignes of the approaching of the mariage day. The gifts and graces of the holy Ghoſt ſhould bee powred foorth in vaine, if theſe ſweet fruites ſhoulde not thereupon bud and floriſh. And when theſe things are, or with theſe things, the bride ſayeth, ſhe wil giue her loue to Chriſt? Shee will giue vppe her ſelf to loue him, yea euen perfectly when the day of the mariage commeth. The faithfull doe now loue the Lorde Ieſus, ſome with greater loue, ſome with leſſe, acording to the meaſure of their faith. For looke how much more firmely and aſſuredlie a man feeleth the loue of God towards him, ſo much more feruently doth he loue God. And ſo the bride ſpeaketh here of an increaſe of her loue As his graces abound towards her, and the fruits thereof more increaſe, ſo her loue ſhall more increaſe, and eſpecially at the time when ſhee ſhall be fullie vnited vnto him.

In the next verſe ſhe mentioneth her fruites, and

and that ſhe reſerueth them wholy to Chriſt her welbeloued. *The Mandrakes haue giuen their ſmell*, (ſayeth ſhee,) or as ſome do take the worde more generally for all amiable flowers, ſuch as be faire and louely: for the Church is as a garden of ſweete flowers. Moreouer ſhee mentioneth the plentie of good fruites, both new and olde, which be within her gates, and that ſhee hath reſerued and kepte them onely for him. Theſe are moſt commendable thinges that ſhe ſpeaketh of: firſt, that ſhe doth ſo flouriſh & abound in ſweete things, which are all holy vertues and fruits of faith, and ſecondly, that ſhee keepeth them only for her Lord. For the true Spouſe is chaſt and faithfull vnto Chriſt: ſhee truſteth in him alone, ſhee runneth not a whoring after falſe Gods: but ſhe honoureth and worſhippeth her Lorde with all the fruites of her faith: *My loue* (ſayeth ſhee) *I haue kept them for thee*. The Church in this place differeth much from that which the Lorde complayneth of in the fift Chapter of the Prophet Eſay, for there he ſheweth what he did for his vineyard, and when he looked it ſhould bring foorth good grapes, it brought foorth ſtinking grapes. The generall eſtate of our church in this land is liker to that in the Prophet, then to this here ſpoken of. The ſtinking grapes hang among vs in great cluſters very plenteouſly euery where for what vices doo not abound? but the amiable flowers, and the ſweete fruits both new and olde

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how ſcarſe are they? Let vs aſſure our ſelues, that if we be not of the number of thoſe which bring forth ſweete fruites vnto Chriſt, it ſhall not auaile vs, that wee haue place for a time in the viſible Church, and bee named and reputed Chriſtians. Thou art a branch of the vine: but as it is written, or as Chriſt ſaith, *Euery branch in mee that beareth not good fruite, hee taketh away.* Iohn 15. The Lorde of his infinite goodnes and mercie looke vpon this Realme, and ſo dreſſe this vine, that it may floriſh and bring foorth good fruite, and in more plentifull maner then hetherto, leaſt the kingdome of God be taken from vs, & giuen to a nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof.

She proceedeth on forward in the next chapter, declaring what a great deſire ſhe hath to bee in his preſence, and to retain him with her, which ariſeth from a vehement loue, whoſe heat cannot be quenched, as ſhe afterwarde expreſſeth. They that be of one familie, as brothers and ſiſters, doe dwell together in familiaritie, each doth vſuallie know where to finde other. According to this ſhee ſaieth: O *that thou wereſt as my brother, that ſucked the breaſtes of my mother, I woulde finde thee without, I would kiſſe thee, then they ſhoulde not deſpleaſe me*. The time will come when ſhee ſhall indeede dwell with him, as brothers and ſiſters do dwell together, when there ſhall be moſt neere familiarity, when ſhee ſhall finde him and imbrace

imbrace him, and for this time ſhe dooth wiſhe. Indeed ſhee hath great cauſe to wiſhe that ſhee might once come to dwell with him: for the fulnes of her ioy and felicitie conſiſteth therein. He doth not now indeed leaue her comfortles while ſhe is vpon earth, but giueth her the comfortable ſignes of his preſence, and at ſome times more then other, but ſhee lyeth ſubiect vnto many reproches, contumelies and proud ſcornings of the wicked and vngodly men of this world. Therefore ſhee ſayeth, *alſo they ſhall not deſpiſe me*. The glory of the whole Church ſhall be ſo great that her proudeſt enemies ſhall not deſpiſe her, but wonder at her. The faithful are now the children of God, but as S. Iohn ſayeth, *it doth not appeare what they ſhall bee*, 1. Iohn 3. An eaſie thing it is now to contemne and deſpiſe the moſt godlie that liue vpon the earth: for the blinde worlde cannot iudge but according to outward appearance. And ſo becauſe they ſee not in them outward glorie, they raile on them, they reproch thē, they account them euen as abiectes & moſt contemptible. But when they ſhall appeare with Chriſt in glorie, their glorie ſhall be ſo great, that none ſhall deſpiſe them. The diuels and al the damned cannot but be tormented with enuie, at the beholding of the glorious eſtate of Gods choſen, whom they had in deriſion, and the end of whoſe life thoſe reprobate men accounted fooliſhnes, the diuell hardening their heartes & blin-

blinding the eyes of their mindes: but deſpiſe them any longer they cannot. Heere is a good comforte for ſuch as dwell among ſcoffers, ſcorners and deriders of religion. Let them ſcoffe and deride for a time at ſuch as ſtudie to pleaſe God: the time will come, when all baſenes and all infirmities being remoued, they ſhall beholde them in another eſtate, in which they ſhall not deſpiſe them.

After ſhe hath expreſſed her wiſh, and what benefite ſhee ſhall receiue thereby, ſhee ſheweth what dutie ſhe for her parte will performe vnto him. For a very vnreaſonable thing it were, that the Church receyuing ſo great benefits by Chriſt ſhould not render ſome duties of thankefulneſſe vnto him. And therefore ſhee ſayeth, *I will lead thee, and bring thee into my mothers houſe.* Ieruſalem from aboue is the mother of all, the church at any time vpō earth is her daughter. The houſe of this her mother, then in this place, ſeemeth to be the heauens into which the Church ſhall accompanie the Lorde. For ſhee ſhall neuer dwell together with him in that familiar ſort which ſhe ſpake of, vntill ſhee come there.

The next clauſe ſtandeth doubtful, whether we ſhall tranſlate it, thou ſhalt teach me, or ſhe ſhall teach me, for in the Hebrew tongue in the future, the ſame word ſtandeth for the third perſon feminine, that is, for the ſecond maſculine, And ſo I ſay, it ſtandeth indifferent here by the

word, vvhether we ſay, thou ſhalt teach mee, or ſhe ſhall teach me. True it is, that the Lord Ieſus is in a double reſpect, the onely teacher, and that is thus, that onely his doctrine is to be taught & he alone lighteneth with his ſpirit. But the vniuerſall Church, as the mother of all particular Churches, dooth as an inſtrument vnder Chriſt, teach and inſtruct with the ſame heauenlie doctrine. And ſo we may take it here that ſhe ſayeth to Chriſt, thou ſhalt teach mee (which I take to be the righter, if we take it here to be ſpoken of the time when the Church ſhal dwell with Chriſt in the heauens: for then there ſhall be no more teaching by men) or that ſhee ſaieth, her mother ſhall teach her, or hath taught her, if one tenſe may bee vſed for an other. But what is that ſhee is to be taught? Euen how ſhee ought, or how ſhe may rightlie performe her dnty towards Chriſte, and that is ſet foorth in the next wordes, *I will cauſe thee to drink ſpiced wine, and wine of the Pomegranate.* According to the ſimilitude in earthly thinges, ſhe profeſieth to entertaine him with a dainty banquet in her mothers houſe. For that is meante by the ſpiced wine, and wine of the Pomegrannee. The ſpirituall things thereby ſignified, are the prayſes by which ſhe will magnifie and ſet foorth his glorie. The Lord hath no need of any creatures to ſet forth his glorie and praiſe: for he hath all fulnes of ioy and happines in himſelfe: but it is his holy will that his creatures ſhal

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be partakers of his glorie, and that they ſhall ſet forth his praiſe, and the ſame prayſing of him is moſt acceptable and delightſome vnto him, which the Bride expreſſeth here by ſpiced wine, and by the iuyce of the Pomegranate. This may encourage vs to be moſt readie and forward in glorifying the Lord, ſeeing it is ſo delightſome and pleaſing in his ſight. If our obedience, our thanks, our praiſe, our gloryfying God, be as ſpiced wine vnto him, what wretches are we, if wee cannot thereby bee moued to thoſe holy duties?

The two next verſes we haue had before: the one how Chriſt doth imbrace his Church, ſupport, comfort and vphold her with both hands. She doth reſt in his armes: for as ſhee ſayeth, *His left hand is vnder my head, and with his right hand he doth imbrace me.* Were it not for this, the Spouſe could neuer endure here in the world. This is our comforte, that the Lord Ieſus dooth thus, as it were with both handes, or both his armes vphold and comforte his choſen, The other verſe is a charge that ſhee layeth vppon the daughters of Ieruſalem, that they doe not ſtirre vp, nor wake her loue, vntill he pleaſe. There be ſome words omitted of the forme of the charge giuen before, but the matter is all one. She doth very ſeriouſly enioyn her companions or daughters to behaue themſelues ſo reuerently and ſo-

berly in the preſence of this moſt glorious bridegrome, that no cauſe bee offered vnto him of diſpleaſure, by which he might take occaſion to depart. When our Lord Ieſus ſheweth himſelfe moſt preſent with his people, by euident tokens of his graces and heauenly gifts: ſuch is the vnreuerent wantonnes of ſome, that they doo not conſider in whoſe preſence they bee. They bee in the aſſemblies, as it were in an Alehouſe, or in an Inne: ſo little they regarde the preſence of Chriſte, or holy thinges. God graunt that we may regard this ſtraight charge laide vpon vs.

Amen.

THE

THE FOVRTEENTH SERMON.

CHAP. VIII.

5 *Who is this that commeth vp out of the wildernes, leaning vpon her welbeloued? I raiſed thee vp vnder an apple tree, there thy mother conceiued thee, there ſhee conceiued that bare thee.*

6 *Set me as a ſeale on thine hart, and as a ſignet vpon thine arme, for loue is as ſtrong as death, ielouſie is cruell as the graue: the coales thereof are fierie coales, & a vehement flame.*

7 *Much water cannot quench loue, neither can the floudes drowne it: If a man ſhould giue all the ſubſtance of his houſe for loue, they woulde greatlie contemne it.*

WEe haue had in this ſong the ſtate of the Church here vpon earth, variable after diuers ſortes: as euen now calling and crying out for her welbeloued: not long after wee haue her as it were ſet downe & the bridegrome calling vpon her to ariſe and come away. Yea

ſometime ſhee is not onely ſet down, but alſo ſhe is laid downe and a ſleepe and vnmindfull of her dutie. The godly doth not continue alwaies alike: but this we muſt know, that howſoeuer they ſwarue for a time, yet they returne, and their end is commendable. And therfore the Church here euen to the end of this ſong continueth in fayth, in zeale, and in performance of all good duties. Here is no more ſwaruing, here is no dulnes, or ſlackeneſſe any more mentioned. This I ſay may be noted, that all and euery one of the true beleeuers, euen the choſen of God, ſtande to the ende.

But let vs come to the words that I haue now read vnto you. Firſt in generall the Bride dooth declare her moſt ardent loue towards Chriſt, in all theſe three verſes. As the words do ſtande in our engliſh tranſlatiō, it cannot be diſcerned who vttereth this ſentence, *Who is this that aſcendeth vp out of the wildernes leaning vpon her welbeloued? I raiſed thee vppe vnder an apple tree. &c.* For there is nothing by the ſpeeche to hinder, but that the Bridegrome may ſpeake it touching his Bride, that he ſtirred her vp vnder an apple tree. Alſo it may ſeeme to bee the ſpeech of ſome other, and leaſt of all it ſeemeth to bee the ſpeech of the Bride. But the Hebrew text doth make it moſt cleare and out of all doubt and controuerſie, that it is the Bride which ſpeaketh: becauſe this clauſe, *I raiſed thee vp, &c.* and alſo this

Thy mother conceiued thee, are ſpoken in the maſculine gender, as to a man, and not as vnto a woman. In her firſt wordes then ſhe ſetteth forth the vehemencie of her loue, as it were by a compariſon ſaying, *Who is ſhee* (for ſo the words are) *that commeth vp &c.* As if ſhee ſhould ſay, where is ſhe to bee found that hath ſhewed the like loue to her welbeloued that I haue ſhewed vnto mine? Where is there any Bride that hath by ſuch effectes declared her loue to her Bridegrome, as I haue to mine? That hath taken ſuch trauaile and indured ſo many afflictions, paſſed through ſo greate perils, to come to her ſpouſe, as I haue vnto mine? What then will ſome man ſay, is this the humilitie of the Church? Doth ſhe now glory and boaſt what ſhee doth for Chriſt? This her boaſting is not in herſelfe, or in her owne merits, or in any vpbrayding manner, what ſhe had done for Chriſt: it is not contrarie vnto humilitie. For the faithfull when they haue been very feruent in loue and zeale towardes Chriſt, & haue endured great thinges for his ſake, may to their comforte both remember and euen mention to the Lord, what they haue endured & gone through for his ſake For withall they doe acknowledge, and that vnfainedly, that they haue been enabled, & made fit thereunto by his grace, & ſo their glorying is not in themſelues, but in the Lorde. Moreouer, when wee can rightly call to minde and mention what hard things we haue willingly endured for

the loue of Chriſt, it boldeneth vs to make requeſt vnto him. For this matter, reade the laſt Chapter of Nehemiah, where you ſhall finde how he reckoneth vp what, & what he had done, and then prayeth to the Lord to remember him therein, and in verſe 22. he craueth that he would pardon him according to his greate mercie, whereby it appeareth that Nehemiah did not mention his well doing, as it were to ſtand in his owne deſartes, for why then ſhould hee pray the Lord to pardon him, according to his great mercie. Euen ſo the Church here, mentioning what ſhee hath done for Chriſt, doth not glorie in her ſelfe. Now marke with what ſpeech ſhee vttereth the effectes of her loue. *Who is ſhee that commeth out of the Wilderneſſe, leaning vppon her welbeloued*, or as the word may be expounded, accompanying her welbeloued. Who is ſhe that to find her welbeloued and to be in his company, hath aſcended out of the wilderneſſe? All the difficultie of the word, which declareth her moſt vehement loue, is, in aſcending for his ſake out of the wildernes: What is then this wilderneſſe? It is the worlde and all worldly deſires. Is that may ſome man ſay, ſuch a great matter, that ſhee aſcendeth out of this world to ſeeke Chriſt? Yea if you doe well conſider what it includeth in it, you will confeſſe that ſhee may well demaunde who is ſhee that hath euer done the like? You know what our Sauiour ſaieth, that *excepte a man*

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denie himſelfe, except hee forſake father and mother, wife and children, houſes and landes, yea and his life, and take vp his croſſe and follow him, he cannot bee his diſciple. All this is here included in this one ſpeech of the Bride, when ſhee ſaith, *that aſcendeth out of the wilderneſſe.* Hee that aſcendeth out of the wilderneſſe, denyeth himſelfe, for the loue he beareth to Chriſt, hee mortifieth and ſubdueth all the ſinfull luſtes of the fleſh, he renounceth the delightes and pleaſures of ſinne, which are ſo ſweete vnto the naturall man. And rather then he will denie the truth of Chriſt, hee will looſe and forſake all thinges that are the deereſt vnto him in the world, yea, euen life it ſelfe, although it be with all exquiſite tormentes. We may ſee then that this is no ſmall thing, that ſhe aſcendeth vp out of the wilderneſſe. They that for the loue of Chriſt forſake carnall pleaſures, mortifie the luſtes of the fleſhe, forgoe worldly commodities, endure all reproches and bitter perſecutions euen vnto death, aſcende vp out of the wilderneſſe, for to aſſociate themſelues to Chriſt: and it is a wonderfull vehement loue that carrieth them ſo farre. Shee may well ſay then, who is ſhee that aſcendeth vp out of the wilderneſſe accompanying her welbeloued? For what Bride is there that hath for her welbeloued, or to accompany her welbeloued, indured ſuch things? Let vs marke well the ſpeech of the Church in this place, becauſe there be many which profeſſe

to loue Chriſt, which yet doo not ioyne themſelues in ſociety with him to aſcend vp out of the wildernes. They profeſſe the goſpell, but yet they take all delights and pleaſures of the fleſh, that they can: they liue euen as other men here in their worldly courſe do liue: ſurely theſe are not like the bride.

The other part of her ſpeech is harder, when ſhe ſaith, *I raiſed thee vp vnder an apple tree, there thy mother conceiued thee, there ſhe &c.* Firſt wee muſt obſerue, that the bride ſpeaketh as a ſpouſe that had ſought vp her welbeloued, and found him, reſting vnder an apple tree: ſhe rayſeth him vp to go with him into the heauenly places: for thither in heart and affection doe the godly, euen while they liue here, aſcend vp with Chriſt, when they haue ſought and found him. That ſhe ſaith vnder an apple tree, wee muſt vnderſtand, that the apple tree of old hath beene dedicate to loue. So that in this we may conſider the loue in which Chriſt reſteth towardes his Church: for were it not for that vnchangeable loue which he beareth towards her, how ſhould ſhe finde him, or where ſhould ſhee finde him? She vſed another ſpeech before in this ſong, and ſaid that loue was his banner ouer her. By his loue ſhe is drawn vnto him, euen as the ſoldiers doe aſſemble vnto their banner or enſigne when it is ſpread. She here raiſeth him vp vnder an apple tree: all is to bee referred vnto his great loue; by that ſhee is drawne

drawne vnto him, by that ſhe findeth him, and by that his loue ſo abounding, is her loue towardes him kindled and enflamed. Alſo vnder this apple tree, the mother of this bridegroome did conceiue him. But who is that mother of Chriſt that conceiued him in this loue or throgh this his loue? Surely her mother is Chriſts mother: for ſhe is not onely the ſpouſe of Chriſt, but as he ſaith, *My ſiſter, my ſpouſe*. She her ſelfe is then alſo the mother of Chriſt, for the Church, euen all the faithfull doo through faith, trauaile with Chriſt. That one place, Reuel. 12. doth ſufficiently teach vs this point, where the auncient Church of the Iewes doeth trauaile with Chriſt, and bring him forth. The promiſes were made of olde, that hee ſhould come and bee borne of a woman, the choſen did belieue it, and expect it, vnto their faith he is borne, yea their faith doth euen as it were trauaile and bring him forth. So the Church is the mother of Chriſt: and Chriſt in the goſpell calleth his diſciples, his mother, his brethren and ſiſters: and euery faithfull ſoule doeth through faith conceiue Chriſt, and the whole Church doth now trauaile with childe, to bring him forth in his ſecond comming, as the auncient Church at his firſt comming. All this faith apprehendeth his loue, and therefore is ſaid here to be vnder an apple tree. Theſe things are very miſticall: and it doth ſtand vs vpon, if wee will be the true children of the Church, to looke well

well vnto them. I meane that wee come to feele the loue of Chriſt, and thereby to conceiue him. For if Chriſt dwell not in vs, wee haue no part in him: and therefore here is mention of conceyuing and bringing him forth. What is more glorious then to bee euen as the mother of Chriſt? And the ſame is euery faithfull ſoule. This ought greatly to ſtirre vp our mindes to ſeeke the holy faith. Thus farre you haue ſeene how ſhe hath ſet forth and declared her moſt vehement loue, by aſcending vp with him out of the wildernes: ſuch a thing as the like is not done by any ſpouſe vnto her welbeloued. Alſo we ſee that this her exceeding loue hath beene kindled and enflamed by his loue. And now in the next verſe her loue breaketh forth into a vehement prayer, that ſhe may bee ioyned moſt neerely vnto him, and that hee will alwayes haue her in mind: rendring a reaſon, that the vehemency & ſtrength of her loue is ſuch as by no meanes it can be ouercome: this is ſet forth by compariſons in this verſe, and in the next verſe following. Firſt ſhe requeſteth that he will ſet her as a ſeale vpon his heart: a ſeale in a ring of golde was euer made much account of as a precious thing: ſhee requeſteth that ſhe may bee ſo eſteemed of him, and that he will ſet her euen vpon his heart. That which is in the hart of a man, is neereſt vnto him, that hee mindeth, that he loueth, that is deere and precious vnto him. She doth alſo deſire to be ſet as a ſeale vpon his

his arme, that is, as a iewell alwaies in ſight: ſo that now wee may ſee the ſumme of her requeſt. She doth in the vehemencie of her loue, deſire to be deere and precious in the eyes of him whome ſhe loueth, and to bee moſt neerely ioyned vnto him as a precious iewell, both in his heart, and vpon his hand, ſo that he may alwayes mind her, and haue her in his ſight: for wee know, that whatſoeuer a man loueth with the greateſt loue, that he deſireth to be neere vnto, yea euen faſtened vnto it. What doo you ſee then here in the bride, how is her affection ſet? Shee doth ſo ſet her heart vpon Chriſt her welbeloued, ſhe doth ſo deſire to bee alwaies with him, that ſhe vtterly contemneth all thinges in compariſon of him. What is the glorie and the pompe, the riches and honors, and the pleaſures of this world vnto her, more then vile droſſe? And now ſhe rendereth the reaſon of her deſire, from the nature and force of loue: for loue (ſaith ſhe) is ſtrong as death. This is the firſt compariſon, whereby ſhe doth expreſſe the force of her loue, death is excee ding ſtrong: for if wee conſider the great might of Princes, of Kings, and of Emperors, yea of all the mightie Monarches in the world, death hath ſubdued and caſt them downe. Who hath beene ſo ſtrong as to reſiſt death? where hath that mighty man been found, that could euer eſchew his ſtroke? Yea if wee conſider from whence death hath his dominion, you ſhall perceiue the force

force thereof to be ſuch, as that it cannot be vanquiſhed by any creature: the rewarde of ſinne is death. This is from the iuſtice of the moſt high Iudge: vnles ſinne bee ſatiſfied and aboliſhed, death cannot in any wiſe be vnderſtoode. Could all the Angels in heauen aboliſh death? Nay they could not ſatiſfie the iuſtice and the wrath of God for ſinne, therefore they cannot ouercome death to deliuer men. Onely the almightie ſonne of God, Ieſus Chriſt God and man, hath encountred hand to hand with this enemie, hath taken away his ſting, and will at the laſt vtterly ſubdue him, ſo that hee ſhall bee quite ſwallowed vp in victorie, 1. Cor. 15. Beholde then the force and ſtrength of death, and ſee how ſhee compareth her loue with it. Her loue will not indure (the force of it is ſuch) but that ſhe muſt bee neerely ioyned vnto her welbeloued. I will not bee ſaide nay, but that ſhe maſt be ſet as a ſeale, euen as a precious iewel vpon his hart, & vpon his arme. Where there is no loue, there is no ioyning vnto Chriſt: there is no ſuch boldnes to come vnto him, but there is feare and horror. Loue as Saint Iohn doth teach in the fourth chapter of his firſt Epiſtle, caſteth out feare: yea as hee ſaith, *perfect loue caſteth out all feare.* Then where loue is weake, the deſire to bee ioyned with Chriſt is weake, where it is ſtrong, there is a ſtronger deſire: and when it falleth, that it bee moſt vehement (as ſhe ſettethit forth here) then is there alſo

ſo the moſt earneſt longing to be euen in his hart and in his hands, as a thing deere and precious vnto him. If this be the effect of loue to deſire to bee ſo neerely ioyned with the Lord, & the effect arguing the cauſe, doth not our weake deſire to be ioyned with Chriſt, argue the great weakneſſe of our loue? The loue of many is ſtrong to the world, and that cauſeth them to deſire to bee euen faſtened vnto it: riches and honors are their welbeloued, other they know none.

The next clauſe is to the ſame effect, when ſhe ſaith, *I louſie is cruell as the graue*. The words are, that ielouſy is hard as the graue: or as we may call it zeale. Wee take ielouſie betweene maried parties, where the one hath the other in ſuſpition that their loue is deriued vnto ſome other. The bride here by zeale of ielouſie vnderſtandeth the vehement affection of loue, in which ſhe deſireth that his affection may alſo be continued towards her. And this ſhe ſaith is hard as the graue: we know what power the graue hath, how hard it is, how inuincible: it deuoureth all men, it keepeth downe all men: for who hath had the ſtrength to come out of it? There haue beene ſome raiſed vp out of it by the power of God, and chiefly the ſonne of God himſelfe, who was buried and roſe againe, but what man hath had the power to raiſe vp himſelfe? To this force of the graue, ſhe compareth the heate and vehemencie of her loue: ſo that ſtill ſhe doth ſhew, that the greatnes

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of her loue will not ſuffer her, but that ſhe muſt needs couet to be ioyned as a ſignet moſt neerely vnto him.

In the next clauſe ſhe ſaith: *the coales thereof are fierie coales, and a vehement flame.* It is manifeſt that ſhe compareth her loue vnto fire, both to the coales, and to the flame: but ſomewhat we are to note firſt about the wordes. Thus wee may tranſlate them: *the coales thereof are coales, the fire of the flame of God.* In the firſt part of this (*the coales therof are coales*) the ſpeech is framed to ſhew that they be exceeding hot coals. The latter part is, to declare that the flame is a wonderfull great flame: for it is, as ſhe ſaith, *the flame of God.* She ſetteth forth the greatnes of the effect, by the greatnes of the cauſe: for as God is greater thē al, ſo are his workes: ſo then this flame of God, is as much as to ſay, a moſt vehement flame. This loue of the Church towardes Chriſt, is fitly compared vnto fire, yea vnto a vehemēt fire, where there be both hot burning coales, and a great flame: for the ſpiritual loue is very hot. For where the ſoule feeleth the loue of Chriſt, it is euē ſet on fire with loue towards him, euen with ſo hot a loue, as ſhe compareth it here vnto the coales and flame of fire. And marke well how the flame is the flame of God: this fire indeede is kindled in the hearts of the faithfull by the holy Ghoſt. If we then will haue theſe coales, if wee will haue the flame of God in vs, let vs craue inſtantly and continually

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the heauenly fire of the lightening ſpirite. Then ſhall wee boldly make our requeſt to bee ſet as a ſignet vpon his heart, and as a ſeale vppon his arme: and it ſhall not be denyed vnto vs. For this we are to aſſure our ſelues, that here is not a demaund or a petition made, which ſhall be denied vnto her. Therefore let euery faithful ſoule aſſure her ſelfe, that if the heate and flame of loue towardes Chriſt bee in her, that then ſhe is ioyned neere vnto him, ſhe is as a precious iewell ſet vpon his heart, and alſo vpon his hand. If our faith be not ſuch, as that it doth kindle ſuch a burning loue of Chriſt in our harts, let vs dot deceiue our ſelues, it is not the true faith: wee may ſeeme to haue confidence or boldnes, but in the time of terror it will faile vs. Meditate therefore (beloued daily, euen with deepe and ſerious meditation, how rich, how ſweete, and how precious the Lord Ieſus is. Call to minde what wonderfull loue hee hath ſhewed towardes vs, what great bleſsings and benefites hee hath beſtowed vpon vs, that thereby if it be poſsible this heauenly fire may bee kindled, yea ſo as that it may bee euen a moſt vehement flame.

And now to the laſt verſe, in which hee doth yet further declare the heate and force of her loue. Thus be her wordes: *Many waters cannot quench this loue: the floodes cannot drowne it.* Herein ſhee doth purpoſely in a moſt high ſorte expreſſe that nothing can ouercome her loue, it

is inuincible. As it is written of the loue of Christ, that nothing can ſeparate his choſen from it: ſo here the ſpouſe affirmeth, that her loue towards him cannot bee put out. And this you muſt obſerue, that ſhe frameth her ſpeech according to her former compariſon, when ſhe ſaid, *the coales thereof are coales, and the fire of the flame of God.* For what fire is there heere, but many waters will quench, at leaſt if floodes of waters doe ouerflow it? But this heauenly fire cannot bee quenched, the floods cannot put it out. The diuell doth ſeeke to caſt out all the waters hee can for to extinguiſh it, yea the dragon doth caſt out a flood out of his mouth, Reuel. 12. but all in vaine, for this loue cannot be quenched. O happie ſpouſe that loueth her bridegroome with ſo ſtrong a loue. She can neuer bee ouerthrowne: ſhe can neuer bee ſeparated from him. Wee ſee ſome that for a brunt doe ſeeme to bee euen wholly ſet on fire with the loue of Chriſt, and after a while it is euen quenched and gone. Many of theſe there be in theſe daies. Let vs beware, for hee that continueth to the ende ſhall bee ſaued.

There is yet one clauſe, that ſhe ſaith: *If a man would giue all the ſubſtance of his houſe for loue, they would vtterly contemne it.* This loue cannot bee wonne away with any goods. The nature of man is much addicted to loue riches, and the treaſures of this world; there is ſcarce any thing

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of ſuch force to winne the heart from Chriſt: but the Church heere affirmeth, that if all treaſures ſhoulde bee offered her to draw her loue from Chriſt, ſhe would vtterly contemne them. This is no ſmal commendation, conſidering (as I ſaid) how the nature of all men is inclined to loue earthly thinges. It is moſt certaine, that many thouſands which profeſſe Chriſtianitie, doe contrary to that which the holy virgine heere profeſſeth. Gold and ſiluer, houſes and lands doe ſo intice them, that they let goe the loue of Chriſt. They doe ſell their loue, yea they euen ſell their ſoules to the diuell, for a little money. Much better it is, that our loue to him be ſuch, as that in reſpect thereof, we account all thinges here below to bee but dung and droſſe. The Lord of his infinite mercy grant vs to be thus affected.

Amen.

THE FIFTEENTH SERMON.

CHAP. VIII.

1 We haue a little sister, & she hath no breastes, what shall we doe for our sister, when she shall bee spoken for?

9 If she be a wall, wee build vpon her a siluer pallace: & if she be a doore, we wil keep her in with boardes of Cedar.

10 I am a wall, and my breastes are as towers, then was I as one that found fauour in his eyes.

11 Salomon *had a vine in* Baal-hamon: *hee gaue the vineyard vnto keepers: euery one bringeth for the fruite thereof a thousand peeces of siluer.*

12 But my vineyard which is mine, is before mee: to thee O Salomon belong the thousand peeces of siluer, and two thousande to them that keepe the fruite thereof.

13 O thou that dwellest in the gardens, thy companions harken to thy voyce, cause mee to heare it.

14 *O my welbeloued, flie away, and be like vnto the Roe, or to the young Hart vpon the mountaines of ſpices.*

WE are nowe come to the concluſion and ſhutting vppe of this Song.. Here bee indeed diuers things to bee handled. As firſt heere is a motion, a conſultation or a demaunde touching the Church of the Gentiles, with a promiſe of great glorie. Secondly, heere is a compariſon made betweene Salomons vineyard, & the Church. And laſtly, Chriſt doth put her in minde of her dutie towards him, and ſhe craueth his preſence and protection in all her neede. Concerning the firſt of theſe, you knowe that in the time of Salomon, when this ſong was made, yea long before, and after, vntill Chriſt aſcended into heauen, the Church was ſhut vp and bounded among the Iewes. God ſuffered the Gentiles to walke in the vanities of their owne minde many hundred yeares: but there were propheſies, and there were promiſes, that the Gentiles ſhould at the comming of the bleſſed ſeed, be receiued to mercie, and be made one bodie with the faithfull of the Iewes. As it is written, *I haue made thee a light of the Gentiles, and the ſaluation to the endes of the earth.* Alſo, *Aske of mee and I will giue thee the heathen for*

thine inheritaunce, and the vttermoſt partes of the earth for thy poſſeſsion. The faithfull in the time of the Lawe vnderſtanding this, are carefull of them. For this is the nature of faith, to breede a loue in the heartes of the godly towardes thoſe which belong to God whom they neuer ſaw, yea that haue been long before them, or that ſhall be long after them. This loue bringeth forth praier for them, and a deſire to procure or further their ſaluation. From hence it is that the bride dooth motion the matter vnto her ſpouſe: *Wee haue a little ſiſter* (ſaith ſhee) *and ſhee hath no breaſtes: what ſhall wee doe for our ſiſter in the day that ſhee ſhall be ſpoken for?* Firſt wee are to obſerue, that this ſpeech is framed according to the manner here in the worlde. A young little damſell is not to bee maried vntill ſhe grow vp in yeares, She is not for mariage, vntill ſhe haue breaſtes to nouriſh the children that ſhe ſhall bring forth. Moreouer, when ſhe doth come to the ripenes of yeres to be beſtowed in mariage, her friends do ſet her forth and ſpeake for her. So here ſhe ſaith, wee haue a little ſiſter, ſhe is not yet growen vp, her time is not yet come to bee betrothed. She hath as yet no breaſts, ſhe hath not to nouriſh vp children. Her time will come that ſhe is to be commended and ſpoken for, what ſhall wee then doe for her? Let vs conſider euery point more particularly. At that time there was no Church of the Gentiles, and yet ſhe ſaith, we haue a ſiſter. How could

could this be ſpoken, ſhe was not yet in being? Here we muſt obſerue, that the decrees and promiſes of God for things to come are ſo certaine, and infallible, that faith apprehendeth them, and ſpeaketh of them before they bee, euen as if they were. And ſo ſhe ſaith, we haue a little ſiſter. It hath beene noted before, that according to the maner of the Hebrewes, the whole is called the mother, & the parts are called ſiſters: that point is cleere enough: but why then doth ſhe not ſay, I haue a little ſiſter, but we haue a little ſiſter? Is the Church of the Gentiles not only ſiſter to the Church of the Iewes, but alſo the ſiſter of Chriſt? Yea, ſhe is the ſiſter of Chriſt alſo. For that you ſee through this Song, that the Lord calleth the Church his ſiſter. Here is the miſterie of his incarnation: for hee hath taken vpon him our nature, he is become the firſt begotten among many brethren: We *are* (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *fleſh of his fleſh, and bones of his bones*, Epheſ. 5. So that he loueth his Church as a ſpouſe, and as a deere ſiſter. Yea the Church of the Gentiles is precious vnto him, euen as the Church of the Iewes. Here may ariſe another queſtion, how the Church of the Iewes could call the Church of the Gentiles a little ſiſter, ſeeing the churches of the Gentiles in greatnes and in number of true children, haue farre exceeded the Church of the Iewes. The Iewes were but one little nation, many great nations there were of the Gentiles, ſo that euery

way the Church of the Gentiles hath in greatnes exceeded the Church of the Iewes: how dooth ſhe then call her a little ſiſter, when ſhe is greater then her ſelfe? I anſwer, that ſhe doth not reſpect the number of the faithfull, which the Churches of the Gentiles ſhould bring forth, but the time: becauſe the time was not yet come that the Gentiles ſhould be called and betrothed vnto Chriſt: ſhe was as yet, as a little virgine, vnder age to bee betrothed. Then for the next point, there was no ſpirituall nouriſhment for children that ſhould be brought vp to God among the Gentiles, there were not the holy Oracles of God, there was not the ſincere milke of the worde. There were wiſe men of this world, great Philoſophers and ſubtill diſputers: but no true doctrine to conuert the ſoule to God, or to nouriſh it vp being conuerted. There was the worſhip of Diuels, and all maner of ſuperſtition. There was great boaſting of diuine knowledge and high wiſedome: but the bride knoweth that in reſpect of the true wiſedome, it was all nothing but fooliſhneſſe: and that is the cauſe why ſhe ſaith, that her little ſiſter hath no breaſtes.

Then touching the care that ſhe hath for this her little ſiſter, thus ſhe ſaith: *What ſhall wee doe for our ſiſter, in the day that ſhee ſhall bee ſpoken for?* The ſumme of her ſpeech is to know what preferment, what honour, glorie and dignitie ſhall be laid vpon the Church of the Gentiles, at the

the time when they ſhoulde bee called and made one bodie with the Iewes. But why doth ſhe not ſay to Chriſt, what wilt thou doe for our ſiſter, ſeeing al the benefits and all the glorie beſtowed vpon the Church doo flow from him alone? Is there any one bleſſing that commeth vppon the Church, whereof the Lord Ieſus alone is not the author? how then ſayeth ſhee, *what ſhall we do for our ſiſter, &c.* Dooth ſhee together with Chriſt beſtow the graces and heauenly bleſſinges? This is eaſilie anſwered. Chriſt Ieſus alone is the fountaine and the author af all heauenly bleſſinges vpon the Church, and yet the auncient church of the Iewes ioyneth her ſelfe with him in calling and decking the Church of the Gentiles, becauſe by her miniſterie the Goſpell was to be preached vnto them. Chriſt Ieſus then as the author, beſtoweth the heauenly treaſures vpō the Gentiles, and the Church of the Iewes, by her miniſtery, is an inſtrument to carrie and to ſpread the ſame among the Gentiles. This we ſee was fulfilled, for the holy Apoſtles, and Euangeliſtes, which preached the Goſpell to the Gentiles, were of the Iewes. Well then ſhe ſayeth to her Spouſe: *what ſhall wee doo for our ſiſter, when ſhee ſhall bee ſpoken for?* Here by the way wee may note, that ſeeing the Church of the Iewes had this care and loue to her little ſiſter the church of the Gentiles, and ſeeing that by her miniſterie, and by the miniſtery of her children the holy Apoſtles and others, the

Goſpell

Gospell was spread among the nations, it is our part now to be as louing and as carefull, and as earnest in her behalfe with the Lord, as shee was for vs: for it doth seem by the doctrine of S. Paul, Rom. 11. that there shall bee againe a Church of the Iewes. Wee ought then to haue the like pitty vppon her, that shee had on vs, when wee were out.

Now followeth the answere of Christ, touching this their little sister, what should be done for her. If she be a wall (saith hee) we will builde vpon her a siluer palace, if she bee a dore we will keepe her in with bordes of Cedar. Wee see plainelie that Christ did allow of this manner of speeche in his spouse, when shee saide, *what shall wee doe for our sister*: for he speaketh after the same maner, saying, *If shee bee a wal, wee will builde vppon her a siluer palace, &c.* Hee dooth not exclude his spouse from this worke, for by her ministerie, it was wrought, as wee noted before. And now touching the summe of the matter, it is this, that shee shall bee builte to be the cittie of God, and a precious palace for the king of glorie to dwell in. For by a wall and a dore, or gate, is meante a cittie, those two partes being put for the whole: and as I said, the siluer palace to bee built vppon the same, is the Palace or temple of the moste high God, As you know the Church is called the temple of God, and the cittie of God. This is the higheſt glorie and dignitie that can come to mor-

mortall men: this matter is handled more at large, Reuel. 21. and there you may reade touching the walles and gates of this cittie, and touching the glorie therof. Thus you may ſee the meaning of this, if ſhe be a wall, and if ſhe bee a gate, there ſhall bee the ſiluer palace, and the bords of Cedar.

And now ſee what the Bride ſaieth to this, *I am a wall, and my breaſtes are as towers, then was I as ſhee that findeth peace in his eyes.* The Church of the Iewes was at that time when this Song was written a wall, or indeede a Cittie, euen the cittie of the great king, and breaſtes ſhee had to nouriſh vp her children, and God dwelled in her as in his palace: but ſhee ſpeaketh here rather vpon this promiſe of Chriſt to the gentiles, when that is accompliſhed, then is ſhe indeed a goodly cittie, then her breaſts become as towers, for then doth the doctrine of Chriſt abound in her. It may ſeeme to make againſt this ſenſe, that ſhee ſpeaketh in the time paſt, and not in the time to come, then was I, and not then ſhall I bee as one that findeth fauour in his eyes. This may bee anſwered two waies, the one that the Hebrewes doe vſe the preterperfect tenſe, ſometimss for the future. Or thus, that in the certainetie of faith, ſhee ſpeaketh of that which was to come, as if it had been come. Here then are three things which the bride gloryeth in touching her happie eſtate at the comming in of her little ſiſter, the Church of

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the Gentiles. The firſt is that ſhe is then a wall, euen a goodly glorious citie indeed, and the ſiluer palace built vppon her. For although ſhee were the Cittie of God before, yet now far more large by the multitude and glorie of the Gentiles comming in, and being made one body with her in Chriſt. But how is it that Chriſt, ſaying, *If ſhee bee a wall*, ſpeaking of her little ſiſter, ſhee maketh not anſwere, ſhee is a wall, but *I am a wal?* The reaſon of this is euident, that although as ſeuerall partes they bee called ſiſters, yet ioyned in one, they be but one Church. Her little ſiſter ioyned vnto her, is become her ſelfe, for in that reſpect ſhee ſaith, I am a wall: I am that glorious cittie of God, in me is that ſiluer palace, the pallace of the great king. The ſecond thing then is, that *her breaſtes are as Towers*. Her little ſiſter ſhee ſaid had no breaſtes: but now the doctrine is ſo plenteous, that her breaſtes be euen as towers, there is milke to nouriſh greate multitudes of chirdren, for when the word of the Lorde wente forth from Ieruſalem, and the law out of Syon, vnto the mightie nations, according as the Prophets foretolde it ſhould come to paſſe, the Lord gaue great giftes of his ſpirit, and great light of knowledge in the heauenlie miſteries, and verie great multitudes were turned to the Lord. In the time of the lawe, the Prophetes did vtter the doctrine of God, and ſpake of Chriſte: but not ſo cleerlie as the Apoſtles did. Now her breaſtes became

became as towers. And then the third thing followeth, that ſhee ſaith, I was then, as ſhee that findeth fauour (or as the worde is) peace in his eyes. Not onely her glorie is now greater by ſo large an addition of the Gentiles, but alſo the time now draweth neere of the mariage. For the Lorde alwaies foretolde that it ſhould be in the laſt dayes, that the Gentiles ſhould bee ioyned to his people. True it is, that at this time, euen when the holy Apoſtles were ſent forth with this commiſſion, *Goe teach all nations, &c.* Matth. 28. The Church was wonderfull gloryous in the Lordes eyes, and the time commeth on very faſt, that ſhee ſhall enioy the full happines for euer. Here wee muſt conſider that the Lorde dealing ſo graciouſly with vs, to bee borne, and to liue in the time of the Goſpell, in the time of this great light, in the time when the breaſtes of the Church are as towers, that there is much to be required at our hands. If wee ſet light by the heauenly doctrine, if wee remaine now in ignorance and blindnes, if wee bee now vnthankefull to the Lorde, how wretched and how miſerable is our eſtate? What haue wee to excuſe our ſelues?

Now wee come to the ſecond thing which is the compariſon betweene Salomons vineyarde and the Church. The Church is called a vine, and a vineyarde, and ſo the compariſon is made here

here betweene her and another vineyarde. As king Salomon did excell in glorie, ſo all thinges that hee had, did in their kinde excell. His vineyarde in Baall Hamon, was a greate and a goodlie vineyard, and ſuch as he made ſpeciall account of, and receyued great commoditie by it. But yet Chriſt ſayeth, it was not like his vineyearde. The differences are noted, the firſt is, that Salomon let out his vineyearde vnto keepers, the ſecond, that he receiued but part of the fruits, & the keepers another parte for their paines. But Chriſte keepeth his vineyard himſelfe, and receyueth not a part, but the whole fruit alone to himſelf. This is the ſumme. But let vs conſider it more particularly by the words, firſt he ſayth, Salomon hath a vine, as I ſaide before, the perſon is named, that wee may know thereby the excellencie of it. Secondly he noteth the place, when he ſaith in Baal Hamon, but not the proper name of any one place, but as if hee ſhould ſay in a moſt fruitfull ſoyle or place: for Baall ſignifyeth a Lord, & Hamon a multitude, ſo that it is as much as to ſay, in a place ſo plenteous for vines that, it bringeth forth a multitude of vines. The place is much for a vine, and therefore when the Lord will ſhew by the Prophet that he did al things to his vineyard to make it bring forth good fruit, he doth begin with the place, for the Prophet ſayeth, *My welbeloued hath a vine*, Bekeren ben ſhamen. Eſay, 5.

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Which is as much to ſay worde for worde, in an horne, the ſonne of fatneſſe. The horne is the corner of an hill, the other is, that it is verie fatte. Then next he ſayeth, that Salomon let foorth his vineyard vnto keepers. For although king Salomon made great account of his vineyarde, yet he did not dwell in it, and keepe it himſelfe. Hee was not ſo much delighted with it, as alwayes to haue it in his preſence, and neuer out of his ſight. For he let it out to keepers. Theſe keepers and dreſſers of the vineyard muſt haue their hire, and therefore it is ſaid, that they bring euery one a thouſand peeces, or ſickles of ſiluer, and part they reſerue to themſelues, as he ſayeth, two hundred peeces. Our Engliſh tranſlation ſaith two thouſande to the keepers, but I ſuppoſe the fault did grow by the Printers, ſetting two thouſande for two hundreth, and not by the tranſlators, ſeeing there is not any thing in the wordes which might leade them to ſay two thouſande. Now come to the reddition. *But my vineyarde which is mine,* (ſayeth the Lord) *is before mee.* Here is the diſſimilitude, the vineyarde of Chriſt, euen his church his deare Spouſe, which appertayneth onelie to him, is before him or alwaies in his preſence, hee is ſo delighted therwith, hee taketh ſuch comfort and ſolace therein, and is ſo deare and precious vnto him, that hee is alwaies preſent with it, and neuer abſent from it one minute, hee watcheth & keepeth

keepeth it himſelfe, and dwelleth in it. Salomon let forth his vnto keepers, but Chriſt doth not let foorth his. And as his eye is alwaies vppon it to keepe it, ſo he hath the whole fruites to himſelfe, Salomon had his parte, and the keepers theirs, but not ſo in this vine, for the whole commeth to Chriſt. I need not ſtande here to ſhew in manie wordes how precious and how deare this vine is to the Lord, that he keepeth it himſelf, and how faithful the church is, which doth bring forth her fruites to none but him. Alſo I will not ſtay vppon this, to ſhew that Chriſt being alwaies preſent with his church, and not letting it forth vnto keepers, how wicked and blaſphemous that doctrine of the Romiſh church is, that affirmeth the pope to bee Chriſtes vicar: as if Chriſt were abſent and had let forth this vineyarde vnto him to keepe. Hereupon he challengeth that he is put in truſt to doe what hee will, Chriſt ſaieth here that his vine is before him, his eye is neuer off from it, he keepeth it himſelfe, it is not let foorth to keepers as if he were abſent like king Salomon fró his vine. *Beholde* (ſayeth hee) *I am with you vnto the ende of the world.* Mat. 28 And he appeareth to Saint Iohn in the middeſt of the ſeauen golden candleſtickes which are the ſeauen Churches. Reuel. 1. You may eaſily then diſcerne what a monſter the Pope is, which will needes bee his Vicar, which is, one in his ſteade to doe that which hee himſelfe

himſelfe ſhould doe if hee were preſent. Here is Antichriſt that is, one that taketh vpon him to be in Chriſtes ſtead, and yet is an aduerſarie. For vnder pretence of doing the dutie of an heade, hee draweth all from Chriſt to receiue his lawes, and to put their truſt in him. Let this monſter paſſe with his ſeduced company, which are not the ſpouſe of Chriſt but his owne ſpouſe. It may here be demanded, doth not Chriſt let forth his vineyarde to dreſſers? Did not Paul plant and Apollo water? doe not all faithfull paſtors and teachers ſhew their dutie in keeping this vine? I aunſwere, it is moſt certaine that the Prophets, the Apoſtles and all holy teachers may after a ſorte bee called keepers and dreſſers of this Vine: but yet no further, but as inſtruments whom Chriſt vſeth: for he is preſent with them, he worketh by them, and therefore he holdeth the ſeauen ſtars in his right hand, which are the Angels of the ſeauen churches, Reuel. 1. The keepers of Salomons vine do keepe it and dreſſe it in his abſence: but the keepers of Chriſtes vine can doe nothing, vnleſſe he be with them and worke by them. As I ſaide before, they be but inſtruments, he vſeth them, hee is alway preſent, and doth worke by them. Alſo it may for the other parte bee ſaid: ſhall not the faithfull teachers receiue reward for their labors. Yes there be promiſes of greate rewarde vnto all that do performe their dutie in that office. Is not

that reward ſome part of the fruit which the vine bringeth forth? No, this reward is promiſed and giuen by the Lorde, it commeth not by men. And thus much for this matter.

Now to the laſt thing of al in the concluſion, which is in two parts: wherof the former is the voice of the Bridegrome calling vpon his ſpouſe to perform her dutie: and the latter is the ſpeech of the Bride, crauing his preſence and ſpeedy ayd in all her neede. His wordes are theſe: *O thou that dwelleſt in the garden, thy companions hearken to thy voice, make mee to heare it.* Here is (as I ſaide) the dutie of the Bride inioyned, yea the great and ſpeciall dutie: but it is darke to bee vnderſtoode, becauſe our engliſh tranſlation hath ſomewhat ſwarued in the laſt worde of the ſentence: for it ſayeth, *make me to heare it*, adding this particle (*it*) which is not in the Hebrew. The worde indeede is, *make mee heare*, in the moſt vſuall ſenſe, and it doth ſignifie to preach, becauſe they that preach, make thoſe to heare whome they preach vnto. In this place therefore wee may take it thus: preach me: for that is the great office of the Church, to publiſh Chriſt. But wee will come to it in order as the words doe ſtande. *O thou that dwelleſt in the gardens.* The whole Church is called a garden full of all ſweet plants, as we had before in this ſong. The particular Churches, which are the parts of the whole, bee called

called gardens. Now, becauſe the vniuerſall Church vpon earth, euen the ſpouſe, is ſpread ouer all, ſhee is ſaid to dwell in the gardens, that is in all the particular aſſemblies which know and worſhip God aright, through the worlde: Her care is ouer all, they bee all her children, and her plantes, and ſo ſhee is ſaide to dwell in the gardens.

The next clauſe is, *The companions hearkening to the voice &c.* Who bee theſe companions, which hearken to the voice of the Church, hee willeth her to preach him vnto them? They bee all men, men of all nations and people, which with reuerence doo heare the heauenly Oracles, which the Church dooth publiſh and ſet foorth. Chriſt Ieſus in the Goſpell giueth this precepte, *Giue not holy thinges to dogges, neyther caſt pearles before ſwine.* Thoſe dogs and ſwine are ſuch people, as the one ſort of them neglect & deſpiſe the heauenly doctrine, & do as it were tread it vnder their feete, the other do hate and perſecute both it, and thoſe that bring it. From ſuch dogs and ſwine, the bridegrome dooth here diſtinguiſh the reuerent hearers of the voice of the Church, calling them fellowes or companions. Here may you obſerue by the gretnes of that dignity which Chriſt giueth vnto them, how acceptable a thing it is before God, to giue eare to the doctrine of God publiſhed by his miniſters. They bee receiued

ued into the fellowſhip of Chriſt and his Saintes. What higher dignitie, then to bee a companion in this ſocietie? How may this encourage vs to giue euen all diligence to hearkē to the doctrine of God, vttered by the Church? Then that hee willeth his ſpouſe to make theſe companions that hearken to her voice, to heare of him: it is as much as to ſay, preach mee vnto them. The Lord ſaid to Peter, *Simon Ioanna loueſt thou mee, more then theſe?* And ſo againe, and the thirde time. And Peter anſwering, *Thou knoweſt Lord that I loue thee*: he addeth: *Feede my ſheepe, feede my lambes, feede my ſheepe.* As if hee ſhoulde ſay, this is the great fruite of thy loue which I require, preach me to my choſen. So the Church profeſſing that great abundant loue of hers, a little before in this chapter, Chriſt requireth that ſhe will ſhew it in preaching him vnto his redeemed. As if hee ſhoulde ſay, of all loue, publiſh and preach me, lay open the treaſures of life and ſaluation that are in me, vnto thoſe that hearken. Herein then lyeth the performance of the great dutie of the Church, and the ſingular declaration of her loue to Chriſt, that ſhe preach him. To glorifie Chriſt, by opening to the world what he is, what treaſures bee in him, is a great matter. And becauſe the life of his ſheep doth depend vpon the preaching of him, hee requireth it of his ſpouſe as a thing moſt acceptable vnto him. Let all the

true

true miniſters of the Goſpel look vpon this, how glorious and how acceptable a worke it is, to preach Chriſt crucified. How happy are they then whom God hath called to that office, ſo they do faithfully diſcharge their dutie?

And now wee will come to the laſt verſe of all in this ſong, which is the ſpeech of the bride, containing a vehement prayer: for as ſhe beganne this ſong, and with prayer, ſo doth ſhe end it, and with prayer. For ſeeing wee haue no good thing of our ſelues, but all good thinges come downe from aboue, the beginning and the ende of our ſong muſt be with prayer. What other way haue we to pull downe graces, and heauenly bleſſings vpon vs, but by this, *Aske and yee ſhall haue, ſeeke and yee ſhall finde, knocke and it ſhall bee opened vnto you.* Math. 7. Our whole ſpirituall life, our happines & our protection dependeth vpon Chriſt: It ſtandeth vs in hand then to call continually vnto him, as the ſpouſe doth here. Touching the words of her prayer, our tranſlation ſaith, *Flie away my welbeloued, and bee like to the Roe or young* Hart. This is not well tranſlated: for doth the Church deſire her Spouſe to depart ſpeedily from her? She requeſteth him to come to her ſpeedily. For the word indeede is: *Flie my welbeloued, and bee like to the Roe or young* Hart: that is come ſpeedily vnto mee. As if ſhee ſhoulde ſay, O my welbeloued, thou doeſt enioyne mee to

preach thee, and to lay open the rich treaſures and glorie of thy grace. I am very willing and readie to performe this dutie, but I ſhall thereby procure mightie enemies: for the prince of darknes will raiſe vp all the bloodie tyrantes that hee can againſt mee: I am feeble and weake of my ſelfe, and not meet to encounter with them. Be not abſent therfore, leaue me not to their deſires, but come ſpeedily for my ſuccour and defence, in all my troubles: for then ſhall I be ſure to preuaile. Whether ſhe call the heauens the mountaines of ſpices, or whether wee take it for the mountaine of the Lord here vpon earth, I take it not much materiall. The ſumme is (as I ſaid) that ſhe craueth his ſwift comming from heauen like a Roe, and his ſpeedie aide and ſuccour, to ſupport, to ſtrengthen and to comfort her in all her troubles and afflictions. The Lord giue vnto vs the true vnderſtanding of this holy ſong, and a liuely feeling of the loue of Chriſt, that we may delight in him, and loue him againe, that we may bring forth the ſweete fruites here mentioned, and be of his pleaſant plants, that when this vaine life is ended, we may raigne with him for euermore in the heauens. Amen.

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